DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 169 186 UD 019 286

AUTHOR	Schmuck, Richard, Ed.; And Others
TITLE	Renewing Urban Schools.
PUB DATE	[79]
NOTE	192p.; Not available in hard copy due to the reproduction quality of the original document ; Best copy available; Special Issue
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Role; *Educational Coordination; *Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Group Relations; *School Improvement; School Organization; Student Participation; Teacher Role; *Urban Education; *Urban Renewal; *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Process Consultation

ABSTRACT

The articles in this report describe efforts at using varieties of process consultation to stimulate renewal in urban schools. Process consultation is a strategy for improving the group and intergroup procedures used by school personnel to reach their educational objectives and to solve their own problems. Emphasis is on the ways teachers, administrators, educational specialists, and/or expert consultants can collaborate in assisting urban school participants to build effective processes of self diagnosis, systematic planning and collaborative problem solving, and deliberate action. It is argued that schools function best when teachers, administrators and students are participating to solve the school's problems. It is also pointed out that planned efforts at facilitating the processes of urban renewal can lead to improvements in the school's instructional programs. (Author/EB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

APR 5 1979

ED169186

Special issue of

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

on

"Renewing Urban Schools"

edited by

Richard Schmuck, Richard Franciso, and Warren Bell
Center for Educational Policy and Management
University of Oregon

and

Thomas Gross and Marc Bassin
High School Renewal Program
New York, New York

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Univ. of Oregon -
Ctr. for Educational
Policy & Management

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Contents

(1) Richard Schmuck, Facilitating School Renewal: The Role of Process Consultation.

(2) Warren Bell, Obstacles to Urban School Renewal: Dilemmas Faced by Consultants.

(3) Marc Bassin, Thomas Gross, and Patricia Jordan, Developing Renewal Processes Within Urban High Schools.

(4) Robert Porterfield and Ilah Porterfield, Functions of School-Based Renewal Coordinators.

(5) Richard Francisco, Process Consultation for School Renewal: The DTA in a West Coast Urban Community.

(6) Christopher Keys, Renewal Processes in Urban Parochial Schools.

(7) Mike Milstein, Developing A Renewal Team Within An Urban School District.

(8) Daniel Scheinfeld, A Three-Faceted Design for Renewing Urban Elementary Schools.

(9) Richard Schmuck, Richard Francisco, Warren Bell, Tom Gross, and Marc Bassin, Meeting the Challenges of Renewing Urban Schools: A Summary of Recommendations.

UD019286

Facilitating School Renewal: The Role of Process Consultation

by

Richard A. Schmuck

Center for Educational Policy and Management
University of Oregon

The staffs and students of our urban schools are continuously being pushed and pulled by the myriad pressures of their complex and turbulent inner-city environments. The sense of powerlessness is high. Feelings of potency to bring about effective change are low. Very few inner-city schools can qualify as self renewing. Urban staffs typically lack the skills, norms, and structures for responding creatively and collaboratively to the many daily challenges they face. Confronted with input overload, they make poor use of their internal resources, become cutoff from their surrounding community, lack the skills of collaboration and group synergy, and are generally traditional and even rigid in their reliance on outmoded educational practices.

This issue explores how progress might be made toward upgrading the processes of self renewal in our urban schools. It addresses how educators might go about facilitating self renewal in inner-city schools. Such facilitation can be carried out by teachers, administrators, educational specialists, or expert consultants. The articles that follow show ways in which all of these key actors within the educational establishment can collaborate in assisting urban school participants to build effective processes of self diagnosis, systematic planning and collaborative problem solving, and deliberate action. A basic value that undergirds the articles of this issue is that schools function best when teachers, administrators, and students are participating enthusiastically to solve the school's problems, and when they, as a "team," have the coordinated ability to respond flexibly and constructively to changes from without and within. A pervasive theme of the articles is that planned efforts at facilitating the processes of urban renewal can lead to improvements in the school's instructional program.

During the past decade three different but overlapping strategies have been used to facilitate self renewal in urban schools. While particular implementations of these strategies often have been unsuccessful, there have been enough successful applications of each of them to warrant their introduction here. The three are: (1) Technical Assistance; (2) Content Training; and (3) Process Consultation.

In Technical Assistance specially trained resource people are employed to fill a particular organizational need of the school as, for instance, when a curriculum expert is hired to design a new educational program in testing or reading, or when a highly-trained specialist is hired part-time to teach a seminar or workshop for students. Other examples occur when a private management firm helps district administrators to decide on the optimal procedure for spending money on needed space or new supplies, or when an architectural firm is given each of the tasks involved in building a new school plant. Some business firms are currently offering technical assistance to schools by contracting to take over aspects of the instructional program with the guarantee of student mastery. These varieties of technical assistance can help the school to fill a temporary gap or to get over a contemporary hurdle, but usually such assistance does not alter the skill levels of educators within the school, nor does it affect the interpersonal relationships and social norms of staff members or between staff and students. Thus, while it may temporarily facilitate increased self renewal of a staff, it typically does not enhance the staff's capability for continuous self-renewal, particularly when the technical assister's contract with the school is completed.

Content Training, another strategy for upgrading a school's capacity for self renewal, aims at educating the professionals in a substantive area so that they will themselves perform more capably. Deliberate attempts are made to raise the professionals' cognitive understanding, feelings of ownership, and commitment to changed procedures. The most typical mechanism of this strategy is the inservice course or workshop wherein an expert trains educators in a substantive subject, such as reading, mathematics, and social studies, or the arts. Other examples of content training include the psychologist who teaches educators about child development, the mathematician who helps teachers develop new instructional strategies, the mental health consultant who helps teachers cope with students who have problems, and the specialists in precision teaching who help teachers to use various reinforcement strategies.

Often content trainers either are employed by an organization other than the school district, such as a university or educational laboratory, or are in private practice, and are contracted with by the administrators for their services. More and more, school districts are hiring their own full-time content specialists in such domains as language arts, science, music, or early childhood education. They are based in the district office, have district-wide responsibilities, and are expected to maintain contacts with outside experts in universities and educational laboratories. They design and arrange inservice workshops for teachers, help to determine the instructional materials that are purchased, and often are available to train individual teachers in new concepts and skills.

The third strategy, Process Consultation, aims at improving the group and intergroup procedures used by school personnel to reach their educational objectives and to solve their own problems. It emphasizes the interpersonal methods and group procedures used by staff members to get collaborative work completed. Process consultants thus deal with such phenomena as the patterns of communication, leadership attempts, underlying tensions, and decision-making procedures. They help with goal setting, organizational diagnosis, problem solving, and program evaluation.

The strategy of process consultation has come of age during the last half of this decade. The social processes of getting work done in groups and organizations have become legitimate topics for both academic study and practical intervention in education. Attesting to the rising interest in process consultation, particularly in relation to educational renewal, are the large number of recent professional symposia, workshops, journal issues, and text books about some aspect of organizational processes and educational change. Underscoring the burgeoning involvement are the results of a recent survey by Miles, Fullan, and Taylor (forthcoming) which indicates that over 75 North American school districts have been engaged in formal programs of process consultation for eighteen months or more. And, it is noteworthy in relation to this issue that 30 or so of those districts are urban.

Facilitating urban school renewal through process consultation represents the primary motif of the articles that follow. This does not mean, however, that process consultation is the sole strategy of focus. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any comprehensive strategy for renewing urban schools that relies completely on a single strategy. Many of the cases that are described in this issue include interventions by technical assisters and content trainers. Indeed, the articles that follow cover a wide array of intervention designs and techniques, all with the common objective of facilitating urban school renewal. Since process consultation does represent a principal meta theory and strategy through which technical assistance and content trainers are introduced in virtually all of the articles, I will set the stage for the issues by showing how process consultation relates to renewal giving examples of its scope, presenting some of its assumptions, meta-goals, and instrumental goals, and by describing some of the typical strategies employed by educators, both inside and outside of the school, to facilitate the processes of renewal within the school.

Relationship of Process Consultation to Renewal

Process consultation aims to enhance the self-renewing capabilities of a school by improving the interpersonal and group procedures used by administrators, teachers, students, and parents to reach their educational objectives. It focuses primarily on the how of interpersonal and group interactions rather than on the what of their content. Process facilitators consequently deal with the processes of problem specification, problem analysis, and problem solving. They often help staff members to specify and select educational goals or help them to solve problems and to take actions that relate directly to programmatic concerns and instructional environments. They typically enhance the staff's work by helping the members to communicate accurately, set goals clearly, confront conflict constructively, solve problems collaboratively, and make decisions jointly.

Success of any sort of consultation in relation to renewal should be measured in terms of how effectively the recipients--the educators, students, or parents of a school--work together in reaching their respective objectives and in solving their respective problems. The intervention's success is determined by how effective the recipients are in defining their problems and goals (which may, for example, have to do with suggesting instructional outcomes for a district's elementary reading program), how resourceful the recipients are in devising ways to reach their goals (which may include conferring with a content consultant reading methods), and how stable, adaptive, and effective the group's work is over time (as indicated, for example, by measuring the long-term utility of an inservice program for teachers).

When process consultation is offered to an entire school or to a sizeable subsystem of a school district, it is referred to as organization development or OD. OD involves a long-range effort in improving the human processes of an organization and is defined as a planned and sustained effort in process consultation to apply behavioral science concepts and techniques for system improvement using reflexive, self-analytic methods. Thus, the emphasis of OD is on the system, rather than the individual, as the primary target of change. And, by using reflexive, self-analytic methods, the consultant involves the system members themselves in the assessment, diagnosis, and transformation of their own school.

Scope of Process Consultation

The most prominent forms of process consultation in urban schools focus on individual role-coaching, team building, total staff development, and in some cases, classroom interactions. In role-coaching the process consultant helps key actors, such as principals or department heads, to clarify and execute their roles more effectively. This may take the form of helping the key actors to collect relevant data about problems and staff concerns, convene meetings, carry out problem solving activities, or to look in-depth at their decision-making procedures. In team building, the process consultant helps an intact group of people who are interdependent and have common goals to clarify their roles and goals, to carry out joint planning and problem solving, and to become more self-analytic and effective in executing their work together. In relation to total staff development, the process consultant works with all the faculty members in an attempt to improve interpersonal skills, clarify role relationships, facilitate intergroup exchanges, and enhance total staff collaboration.

When carrying out a classroom intervention, the process consultant works with the teacher(s) and students to improve the quality of group processes in the classroom. Typically, role-coaching, team building, total staff development and classroom interactions constitute the ingredients of an organization development program for a school.

Strategies of Process Consultation

The designs of consultations can usefully be divided into macro-aspects and micro-aspects. Macro-aspects include the overall structure and outline, the sequence of parts, and the general forms through which the activities flow. Micro-aspects are the specific activities carried out during any limited period such as an hour, a day, or a week or consultation. Here I briefly present some aspects of macro-designs. For a more detailed presentation of macro as well as micro aspects of designing, see Chapters 9 and 10 of Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (1977).

Different diagnoses of where the system is will lead to different macro-designs. For instance, depending on the sophistication of the group, and the group's expressed difficulties, the consultant might try to deal early with the actual organizational problems such as role conflict and task interdependence, or the consultant might rather offer more basic skill training in communications with a new group. As another example, the problem of low goal clarity may encourage the consultant to start off with an agenda-building activity, or if decision making appears to be an organizational problem the consultant might choose to present the option of two or more designs and to encourage the participants to decide which is more appropriate for their needs.

In general, four motifs characterize most macro-designs that are being used by process consultants today. These include training, data feedback, confrontation, and process observation and feedback; each of which offers a vehicle for uncovering and specifying problems. For example, during training, participants learn skills that allow them to share previously unshared data and to pinpoint problems not previously discussed. Typically, communication and problem-solving skills are first practiced in simulations and group exercises during training designs. Later problems are specified. In data feedback, the consultant collects and reports previously unshared data to the group, thereby indicating the sorts of problems the members perceive existing in the group. Often, data feedback involves the consultant in interviewing many of the group's members prior to the feedback meetings. In confrontation, another group reports its perceptions and feelings to a client group and vice versa. The resulting intergroup images are used for specifying problems, carrying out problem-solving, and for negotiating solutions. Finally, in process observation and feedback, the consultant reports his or her impressions about the ways group members are working together, specifying process problems that the group is having, and urges the group to work on the problems.

Put in other language, in a training-design, participants begin to uncover real problems through skill practice and learning games. In contrast, problems are identified within a data feedback design by the consultant imposing considerable structure on the data he or she has collected. Confrontation designs call for problems being identified as a consequence of cross-role and cross-group exchanges, while in process observation and feedback the consultant tries to help group members see their problems during the time they are working together on real tasks. Whether the design motif primarily involves training, data feedback, confrontation, or process observation, all of these are followed by systematic problem solving, action taking, and evaluation.

Assumptions of Process Consultation

An underlying assumption of process consultation is that people in teams, schools and districts are interdependent, that is, they depend on one another to accomplish common goals. This interdependence defines the team, school or district as a system, an organization with particular behavioral and programmatic regularities which do not depend entirely for their existence on particular personalities. These behavioral patterns and programmatic regularities also define what is meant by the "culture" of a system.

The tenacity of a system's culture lies in the power of norms, how well they are adhered to, and how resistant they are to change. Norms are shared expectations, usually implicit, that help to guide the psychological processes and behaviors of group members. Note that this definition of norms emphasizes sharing; norms occur in groups and organizations and are not merely intrapsychic processes. When a norm is present, most people know that their view of things is also held by others and that the others expect them to have the same viewpoint and to behave accordingly.

Therefore, process consultation assumes that any effort at educational reform must attend to changing the system's norms--the shared expectations about behavioral and programmatic regularities--that is, the culture of a system.

Process consultation further assumes that many of the resources for effective change lie within the school staff itself and that current organizational norms, structures, and procedures are such that some of the staff's resources remain untapped and under used. While by no means can all of a school's problems be solved through the mobilization of staff resources, it is assumed that considerable progress can typically be made by most schools in coping with the external presses of the community when the respective resources of staff members are bing fully harnassed during continuous problem solving activities.

Meta-Goals of Process Consultation

The overall objective of process consultation for organization development is to build self-renewing schools, schools that are able to adapt to current changes within the student body and community, while continuing to maintain an effective educational program. A school that is self-renewing has the organizational capacity to solve its own problems on a continual basis. Thus, the process consultation aims to help educators to solve their own problems; the consultant does not solve problems for the educators. Indicators, of an organizational capacity to solve problems and thus to renew itself are norms, structures, and procedures having to do with school participants: (1) systematically diagnosing the process and products of the school program; (2) proactively reaching out to retrieve information and other resources to improve the school program; and (3) rapidly banding together to take effective action to use the diagnoses and the retrieved resources for school improvement.

Instrumental Goals of Process Consultation

The following goals of planned and sustained process consultation are phrased in terms of action steps to help the system adapt to meet environmental changes and to become more self-renewing:

(1) Clarifying Communication. The approach argues that all parts of a system — the administrators, teachers, specialists, students, and parents — must learn to clarify the messages they receive from one another. Skill in communication can develop internal and external channels that map the environment more accurately. Ambiguity and conflict about norms and roles can be alleviated by developing more precision in the transmission and reception of information.

(2) Establishing Collective Goals. Educational goals are usually ambiguous and diffuse. Organizational participants can learn to clarify and share their objectives and to increase their sense of "owning" the goals and integrating their efforts.

(3) Uncovering Conflicts and Interdependence. Clarifying communication and goals typically will lead to increased awareness of areas of conflict and interdependence. This shared awareness can point to requirements of new differentiation and integration that were previously unrecognized. Confronting conflicts and exploring interdependencies will usually be necessary in helping the participants to establish norms and roles that will aid them in working together. Norms for collaboration can replace norms for the mere avoidance of conflict, and functional interdependence can replace submission.

(4) Improving Group Procedures. Much organizational activity occurs in meetings of face-to-face groups. Meetings are rarely satisfying or productive for all group members and they are often frustrating. Procedures for creating and using new skills for facilitating task productivity and group maintenance can help any meeting to be more satisfactory. Meetings can serve as integrating devices if they use problem-solving procedures that maximize the exploitation of available resources.

(5) Solving Problems. A system's ability to meet environmental contingencies implies active engagement in continuous problem-solving cycles for identifying, analyzing, and acting on environmental contingencies. Process consultation can help systems to harness their resources to extract creative solutions that yield a higher rate of success than solutions that merely extrapolate past practices.

(6) Making decisions. The process consultant aims to disperse influence much more widely throughout the system than is usual in present-day schools and other educational groups. Students and parents are encouraged to take an active, constructive part in influencing what transpires in the school. It is important to note that power need not be decreased in one role to be increased at another, although sometimes it is helpful to reduce authority if it is not based on knowledge and competence. Educators, students, and parents can learn alternate styles of making decisions to assure commitment from those who must carry out the decisions.

(7) Assessing changes. Change for its own sake does not necessarily lead to adaptability. School participants should, however, develop criteria for measuring and evaluating progress toward meeting both long-range and short-range goals. And they must devise methods of self-assessment that permit the group or school to modify its procedures and adjust its structures to meet ever changing demands from the environment. Such adjustments are the heart of school renewal.

Values of Process Consultation

A shortened way of describing the most basic value of process consultation is that of joining and working together collaboratively with educators, community representatives, students and parents to strive toward creating new, more democratic social structures and more humanized interpersonal relationships. In short, it is self-renewal which is the core value of process consultation. Attendant values involve expanding all of the participants' consciousnesses about how others think and feel and finding more and more choices for new action. Very important to process consultation and self-renewal are (1) the valuing of I-Thou interactions in which authenticity in interpersonal relations as well as treating others with respect are very important; (2) a collaborative, democratic conception of freedom and control with major emphasis on participation and interpersonal caring; and (3) the valuing of internal commitment so that the new directions a system will take are psychologically owned by the participants.

Contents of This Issue

All of the articles that follow describe efforts at using various varieties of process consultation to stimulate renewal in urban schools. Bell delineates the obstacles that urban schools present to the process consultant. His article sets the stage for the descriptions of change efforts that follow. The next two articles were prepared by staff members of the high school renewal project in New York City. In the former, Bassin, Gross, and Jordan explain what renewal is and how it works in large, urban high schools. In the latter article, Porterfield and Porterfield describe what renewal looks like on "the firing line." Both Porterfields have been renewal coordinators within New York high schools. Next Keys shows how process consultation was used to stimulate renewal in urban parochical schools. His intervention relied a great deal on data feedback. Francisco's article which follows shows how the four motifs of macro-designs (training, data feedback, confrontation, and process observation and feedback) can be integrated when carrying out renewal efforts within a large urban district. In the next article, Milstein shows how a team of process consultants can be developed within an urban district to help with renewal. And in the last case of change, Scheinfeld describes a complex intervention for renewal which involves consultation for change in classrooms, in the school organization, and in the relationship between the school and its community. Finally, Bell, Francisco, Bassin, and Gross team with me in the last article to summarize what we believe to be the most important challenges in urban school renewal and some possible strategies for meeting them.

References

Miles, Matthew and Fullan, Michael. "The Nature and Impact of OD in Schools," in Milstein, M. (ed.) Schools, Conflict and Change. New York: Teachers College, forthcoming.

Schmuck, Richard, Runkel, Philip, Arends, Jane, and Arends, Richard. Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1977.

Obstacles to Urban School Renewal:

Dilemmas Faced by Consultants

by

Warren E. Bell

Center for Educational Policy and Management
University of Oregon

Consultants, Beware! Pick the following statements which depict urban schools compared with schools in general.

Urban schools have the:

1. highest percentage of racial and cultural minorities.
2. highest degree of teacher turnover.
3. largest number of teacher substitute needs.
4. highest incidence of gang violence.
5. highest degree of administrative turnover.
6. highest number of inexperiences, nontenured teachers.
7. greatest needs in terms of building maintenacne and materials.
8. lowest achievement scores, especially in reading skills.
9. highest percentage of minority teachers.
10. greatest number of serious discipline disruptions.
11. greatest need in terms of health and social services.
12. highest droput rates.
13. greatest number of older buildings and outdated equipment.
14. greatest need for financial funds for compensatory aid.
15. greatest distance regarding social distance between parents and teachers.
16. highest percentage of provisionally certified teachers.
17. highest percentage of over-age children per grade.
18. greatest problems regarding attendance, truancy and transient rates.*

That's right! All eighteen statements depict the state of affairs in urban schools. In fact, according to Lightfoot (1978) a majority of those conditions exist in more than 50 percent of urban schools in the United States. As the above list indicates, the conditions in which urban school people work are extreme. The problems they face are overwhelming. Many seem to defy solution. And all present challenges to the consultant working in urban schools.

---

* Adapted from Lightfoot (1978)

It would require numerous pages to examine the range and nature of problems facing urban schools. That is not the purpose of this paper. That examination has been done quite adequately by others, notably, Lightfoot, 1978 and 1972; Hummel and Nagle, 1973; Rist, 1973; Kruszynski, 1970; Brickman and Lehrer, 1972; and Vairo and Perel, 1969. The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the special conditions of urban schools that operate as barriers to renewal and present perplexing difficulties for renewal efforts. Much of the content of this paper comes from our*experiences--our study and work--in urban schools over the past three years. During that time we have been studying and providing technical assistance to schools in New York, Washington, D.C., Louisville, Minneapolis, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Oakland. In addition, many of the conditions described are vividly portrayed in the literature as previously noted. The problems and conditions of urban schools that operate as obstacles to renewal are organized into two clusters: those associated with the external conditions faced by urban schools, and those relating to the internal capacity of urban schools to respond adequately to present conditions. A brief discussion of both clusters of conditions and how they interact in a cyclical way to create a climate of recurrent frustration concludes the paper.

---

* The Strategies of Organizational Change Program, Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. Though I am responsible for this paper in its present form, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues in the Strategies of Organizational Change Program, particularly the editing and critiquing of earlier drafts done by Richard Schmuck,

Externality of Problems Facing Urban Schools

Many of the most severe problems and disruptions facing urban schools originate outside the school. Racial segregation, unemployment, high crime rates, large number of families on welfare, high population density, substandard housing, numerous communication problems with agencies such as the police, school, social welfare, employment and health and family services characterize the culture of poverty in which many urban schools are embedded. All of these external conditions put pressures on urban youngsters to develop coping and survival skills many of which do not match well with the organizational norms, structures, and procedures of urban schools. The situation is analogous to having a machine that was designed to peel and core apples and insisting that the thing will work just as well with peaches. It just won't work. The machine will crush and damage the peaches, perhaps beyond use, and strain it's belts, and over-heat it's motors at the same time. At present, many are being crushed and damaged, possibly beyond use, and the schools themselves are being strained to their limits.

Schools were designed to educate youngsters who grew up in neighborhoods that were relatively free of the complex problems associated with sustained poverty and who had been instilled with certain values, attitudes, behaviors and skills which matched the structures and procedures used in schools. In urban schools, mismatches between student skills and attitudes and school practices are numerous. For example, urban youngsters must become independent, self-reliant and survival oriented early in life. To them, relevance is viewed in terms of the day-to-day necessities of survival, and the meaningful in terms of immediate gratification and payoff. Yet, all to often, the school's offerings are unrelated to day-to-day problems and the student is required to delay gratification and devote energy to tasks that have only indirect, future-oriented pay-offs. Unfortunately, in most urban schools, there are large numbers of students experiencing severe mismatches between their skills, attitudes, and behaviors and those required by the norms, structures and procedures of the school. In some urban schools in which we have consulted, the number of students identified as in need of remediation (those with severe mismatches) exceeds 60 percent of the enrollment. As long as this kind of percentage remains high, the school will experience undue stress. And, this stress will continue until the school can adjust and get back in tune with its environment.

Ultimately many of the problems confronting urban schools originate outside the school and are closely associated with the culture of poverty in which schools are embedded. To a large extent, schools can do little to alleviate the causes of those problems, instead they find themselves constantly reacting to these conditions often in make-shift, haphazard ways.

While schools can do little to affect the causes of these problems, they can, and I believe must, adjust and adapt their practices to minimize the mismatches that occur between student skills and attitudes and the school's norms, structures and procedures. The process of constructive adjustment to environmental conditions and planned adaptation to change is what is meant by renewal. Unfortunately, much of the impetus for renewal in urban schools comes from sources external to the schools, and the schools find themselves constantly trying to comply with externally imposed demands for change.

Not only do many of the problems facing urban schools have their origins outside the schools boundaries, but many of the solutions to the problems originate outside the school. Court-ordered busing is a case in point. In the last ten years, there has been a proliferation of State and Federal programs designed to remedy some of the ills facing urban children and urban schools. Unfortunately, along with these special programs has come a labyrinth of program guidelines, administrative restraints, and bureaucratic regulations. In most instances, these regulations are developed outside the school setting, and are transmitted to the school in lengthy documents with attached forms to be filled out periodically and returned to some office. And if this were not enough, most urban schools must contend with an equally complicated, constantly changing set of district policies and regulations. As one urban principal recently lamented, "All of the responsibility for running the school falls here (on her shoulders), but all the decision making is done there (downtown at the district office)." The fact that many of the problems facing urban schools as well as many of the solutions to the problems originate outside the school results in three kinds of alienation that are obstacles to renewal and present particular challenges to consultants.

Hopelessness

Because of the nature of many of the problems associated with the complexities of urban life, many school people have defined the situation as hopeless. "The students are unteachable,""the parents don't care," or "the kids are dumb" are comments often made in frustration after attempting to present a lesson or start a project. The responsibility for failure is shifted to the external community. To some extent this kind of assessment is of course partially valid. The students are "unteachable" if one solely relies on existing structures and procedures. Schooling in urban America is a complex, challenging task. Unfortunately, the community is often used to excuse the ineffectiveness of the school. Instead of systematically assessing their programs and modifying them to meet the needs of students, school personnel, all to frequently, throw up their arms in frustration, point their finger at the community, and blunder on with the same ineffective strategies and methods as before.

Helplessness

Because many of the regulations and guidelines for special projects originate outside the school, many school people see themselves as "pawns" whose actions are largely determined by others. Teachers are often asked (or told) to fill out reams upon reams of forms, prepare reports and documents only to find that the "regulations have been changed (simplified) this year" and the work must be done over. Project coordinators and administrators spend numerous hours attending meetings, being briefed and trying to inform themselves of the constantly changing maze of regulations and policies. In this way, school personnel spend valuable time and energy either doing what they think others expect or trying to figure out what others expect. Often these tasks have little to do with instruction or assisting students. Usually, their purpose is to satisfy the concerns of supervisors, bureaucrats of the ever-threatening auditor.

The emphasis placed on regulations and guidelines, and school people's perception that they are helpless to change these regulations often results in completely inane implementation procedures. For example, in one school we visited, students were being shuffled in and out of a special projects classroom every 20 minutes. Why? Because "We have to show that these students are receiving services 'above and beyond' those already provided by the district or we will lose the project money." Considering the fact that on a good day it took these students at least 15 minutes to settle down and get on task, the whole arrangement seemed utterly absurd--so much for "above and beyond." Again the major reasons for doing something in a certain way came from outside the school and no one had stopped to challenge the existing ways. Instead, the guidelines took precedence, the project was served, the bureaucratic regulations were met, the students were shuffled and the teachers complied as if they were helpless pawns of some external force.

Depersonalization

Finally, the heavy reliance on outside funds and special programs has resulted in the phenomena of depersonalization in urban schools. While related to helplessness, this type of alienation is characterized by unnecessary role specialization, multiple role responsibilities and the fragmentation of people into various role categories. It is the rare urban school comprised of teachers, a vice-principal and principal. Many are comprised of a principal, several assistant principals, teachers, counselors, content specialists, medial specialists, community coordinators, special projects coordinators, instructional aides, supervisory aides, and ocassionally a school psychologist or curriculum specialist. Unfortunately, these additional resource personnel are usually funded from a variety of special programs, each with its concommitant specifications and guidelines. Often these specifications are extensive and detailed, specifying duties, responsibilities and task assignments to the last detail. School people spend valuable time and energy trying to understand and comply with each role specification. In some cases this task is overwhelming. In one school in which we worked, one person was fragmented into four different roles (teacher, counselor, reading specialist, and program administrator) and each role had detailed specifications accompanying it. This person often complained that she spent so much time "figuring out what each job required she didn't have time to do the job well." She felt more like a "cog in a machine than a professional educator." This kind of fragmentation and role specificity are not uncommon in urban schools and it often results in depersonalizing tasks and roles and leaving the people in urban schools with a sense of being a nobody.

These three kinds of alienation, hopelessness, helplessness, and depersonalization, combine to create a sense of powerlessness among people in urban schools. Instances of wheel-spinning are frequent. Accounts of failure are numerous. Occasions for satisfaction are rare. A sense of futility permeates most activities. People in urban schools often see themselves as unable to improve their own plight. They speak of themselves as buffeted by conditions that are beyond their control or ability to do anything about. They see themselves as governed by rules and regulations that originated outside the school and have little to do with their particular needs or problems. And, they often feel as if they are nameless role-holders performing a series of duties that were specified by someone else. In a word, they define themselves as victims and perceive themselves as powerless in the face of present conditions.

The sense of powerlessness among urban school people presents particular challenges to renewal efforts and school consultants. The task facing the consultant becomes one of helping school people define or refine problems in ways that enable them to do something about them--that allow small first steps to be taken. The consultant must attempt to raise the hopes of school people all the while being careful not to raise them so far that another failure experience will occur. In other instances the consultants task becomes one of helping urban educators to challenge some of the external demands and regulations or at least to find ways of coping with them that minimally disrupt the school program. This often requires some confrontation within the school and the consultant must be careful not to threaten those responsible for meeting external demands to the extent that they will react defensively and require even stricter adherence to guidelines. Finally, the consultant must encourage the expression of feelings and sharing of personal concerns about tasks, duties, and the workings of the school. In this way, jobs can be personalized and people can come to see each other as people rather than role holders.

Internal Capacity of Urban Schools

Upon entering urban schools, particularly inner city schools, I was initially struck by the chaos, noise, and tension. A climate of crisis seems to pervade the schools. Groups of students congregate in the halls, doorways, and near the corners of the yard. Often, as you approach, conversations and activities become muted, but only for a moment. A curious student may ask "You a teacher? From downtown? The police? What ya here for?" With those questions answered, he may then tell you where he will be next period and invite you to come and see his class or ask about your sunglasses or whether or not your in sports. The conversation is short, quick, responsive and engaging and somehow the initial distance is bridged. The student seems cautiously open, playful and curious.

When classes begin, students swirl from the yard through the halls and into the classrooms, carrying their conversations, activities and play with them. Many clusters remain in the yard or tarry in the hall waiting the approach of a teacher or supervisor before entering the class. Once inside, the play and banter continues. Students spill into their seats and out again while for no apparent reason. They harass and belittle one another constantly, making derogatory comments about each others appearance, behavior, clothing, friends, home and family. "Running the dozens" is the name of the game, depreciation is the guiding rule. Teachers attempt to take role and start a lesson but are soon caught up in the swirl. Shouting at students, screaming at students is common. On occasion, teachers resort to physical means of control, patrolling the room with a ruler or paddle. The threat of punitive reprisal is constant.

Usually, the first third of the class period is spent taking role, quieting the students and trying to start some sort of lesson. However, even as the students start to work, 20 to 30 percent of the class may be out their seats, sharpening pencils, talking to friends, trying to leave unnoticed, or just cruising about the room. Interruptions are numerous. Students leaving to attend special classes, students returning from the counselor, notes from the office about students, announcements over the loud speaker, visitors, and guests are frequent. As the period nears an end the noise and disruption heighten. The last five to ten minutes of a class period are often totally consumed with student disruptions, talk and harassment and efforts by the teacher to maintain order. When the bell rings the students swirl from the class into the hall and yard and the pattern begins anew. And amidst all of this, students are expected to learn and teachers to teach.

As these patterns continued day after day, I was struck by two facts. First, no one seemed to want or like the chaos, tension and climate of crisis that pervaded the school. Everyone, students, teachers, parents, and administrators, complained about the chaos and lack of discipline and pointed out its deleterious effects. But even more perplexing was the related fact that no one seemed capable of doing anything to improve conditions. Most shrugged their shoulders and accepted the chaos as "the way things are: and were grateful they weren't worse. Some of the reason for this acceptance is due to the externality of the problems facing school people--the phenomenon discussed in the previous section--but part of the reason lies within the schools themselves.

Several conditions of urban schools seem pertinent to this point. Each of these combine to reduce significantly the school's capacity to respond to present conditions and operate as obstacles to renewal in urban schools. Further, they interact in a cyclical way to create a climate of recurrent frustration among well-meaning urban educators.

Incongruent Competence

Teaching urban youngsters is a complex, challenging task that requires innovative techniques, flexible and responsive methods and limitless energy and patience. Unfortunately, many of the personnel in urban schools do not have the expertise needed to respond adequately to present conditions. Most teachers have been trained in instructional techniques and strategies that are effective in orderly, planned, and controlled situations--conditions that are almost nonexistent in urban schools. Few have had special training in skill remediation and development or been prepared to teach children from culturally and economically impoverished environments. Few have been taught how to use reinforcement principles, group processes or personalized instructional strategies to motivate and interest students. And fewer still are being provided with the support, expertise and inservice training needed to enable them to become effective urban educators. Instead, teachers and administrators are often expected to learn by trial and error and they are forced to rely on outmoded and inappropriate techniques which clash with the needs, skills, and interests of urban youth. The result is chaos.

Examples of incongrencies between the competence and preparation of urban educators and what they are required to do are numerous. In one school in which we worked, over 50 percent of the students were reading two or more years below grade level, and many of these were reading at the third or fourth grade level, yet the teachers in charge had been prepared to be secondary teachers with content specialisties. As one teacher confided "Maybe someday the universities will realize that it takes more than enthusiasm and good intentions to teach these kids, maybe then they will give us some special skills and methods that will work here." This teacher was neither incompetent nor unconcerned, her preparation skills and knowledge were incongruent with the demands of her job and the needs of her students. Unfortunately, she is not an isolated case, all to often the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to adequately respond to inner-city students, meet their needs and educate them are not possessed by those now being asked to perform the task.*

Insufficient Energy

Even if energy and enthusiasm were enough, our experience suggests that there isn't enough in schools to meet the demands of urban schooling. Most people in urban schools simply do not have the physical and psychological energy needed to examine their procedures and devise new more effective ones. Most teachers leave the school soon after the students. You can't blame them. They are weary, worn out, and in need of escape, quiet and solitude and a chance to recoop for the next day. They aren't disinterested or lazy as some have accused. They are simply exhausted. They can give no more, cope with no more conflict or demands. The day of chaos and tension has taken its toll.

The toll of the tension and chaos is displayed in many ways.

---

*It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the arguments surrounding the appropriateness of teacher training programs in light of the demands of urban schooling. For an enlightening discussion of these issues see Lightfoot (1978).

Weary complaining, health problems, absenteeism and job transfers are common. When people do come together to work on common problems, their interactions are often brief, nettling, and solution oriented. When staff meetings are held, people tend to be irritable, sullen, withdrawn, and negative. After attending to more non-instructional demands than their counterparts in the suburbs and working with greater numbers of aggressive, acting-out, insubordinate children than their counterparts, it is no wonder. At that time to ask the staff to be creative, innovative and solve complex difficult problems is to ask the impossible. Even though the need is there, even though the awareness is there, the staff does not have the energy reserves, the human resources needed to work on anything but the most pressing, immediate problems.

Inappropriate Isolation

Urban schools are comprised of isolated individuals--teachers and administrators working alone to meet the needs and teach inner-city youth. This phenomena of isolation and aloneness is not unique to urban schools, it exists in other schools also. It is not a characteristic of all urban schools, but it appears to be a pronounced feature of many urban schools.

Teachers and administrators who work in these schools seem lonely, alienated from each other, and unable or unwilling to build human bonds or pool professional skills for the common good. Instances of comradery are rare. Collegiality is usually shallow and symbolic. Teachers operate alone, isolated in their rooms venturing out only for yard duty or lunch. It is not uncommon for a teacher to enter the school, sign in, go to his or her room, remain there throughout the day and sign out at the end of the day with little more than a nod to fellow teachers.

When interactions do occur between teachers or between teachers and administrators, they usually focus on such problems as lavatory patrol, yard duty, tardy slips, disciplinary referral forms, or supply lists. Seldom, in fact never, have I heard conversations between teachers about what was actually going on in the classroom. The topic of instructional strategies, curriculum choices, or educational goals seem to be taboo. Discipline, noise, and behavior problems are topics of complaint and catharsis, but seldom do these conversations include exchanges of support and encouragement or ideas and techniques to resolve the problems. In describing his experiences in urban schools, McCullough (1974) recounts how he "longed for a comfortable place to sit and swap stories, share frustrations and pleasures, and learn from other teachers." Unfortunately, that does not happen very often in schools and it seems even more infrequent in urban schools.

The reasons for the isolation in urban schools--the apparent lack of sustained collaborative efforts--are many and varied. In some cases, it is due to the lack of skills on the part of members. This is particularly true with parents and community people. Often, they do not have the knowledge and skill needed to easily join forces with school people, accomplish tasks and help improve conditions. Unfortunately, most people in the schools do not have the time, energy or skills to train parents and community people. Further, school people often possess inadequate knowledge and skill about group processes, and interpersonal dynamics that are vital to effective collaboration.

Inadequate skill and knowledge is only one of the reasons for the isolation. In other cases, there are few channels for collaboration available to school people. The structures of schools often are barriers to collaboration and foster isolated work. Individual task assignments, few common prep periods, isolated classrooms, lack of open usable area, small, dark teacher lounges, all combine to hinder efforts of collaboration. Some structures--group and committee--have resulted from special projects or are required by special programs. However, just as often special programs have resulted in specialized roles, task differentiation, and a fragmenting of the school.

However, even if people have sufficient skills and the opportunities for collaboration exist, they often maintain their isolation and struggle on alone. Why? Because that is what they believe they are expected to do--the norms of the school support individual work and do not support collaborative efforts. Many people in urban schools believe they are supposed to run their classroom alone or manage a program in isolation, after all, they are the one that is responsible. Some are isolated by the fear that to ask another for help would be perceived by others as an admission of incompetence or failure. Many do not expect, or in some cases want, to work closely with other colleagues. They do not see their roles as requiring collaborative effort and have experienced efforts of working with others as frustrating, time consuming and usually fruitless. Therefore, they press for role definitions and task responsibilities that minimize interdependence and render the need for collaboration null and void.

Finally, many urban teachers and administrators see themselves as employees of the district rather than as members of a group of people in a school that are working together to accomplish a common task. Their allegiance is to the district, not the school. Their jobs, roles and responsibilities are determined by the district, not the school. They are simply assigned to a particular school and they go there to fulfill their duties as defined by the district. This set of expectations and attitudes is strengthened by district office personnel who spend days, writing role descriptions, clarifying district policy and specifying district procedures. These procedures and guidelines are then conveyed to the school, where school people spend hours and days individually trying to comply instead of working together to solve problems and better programs at the school. And if that were not enough, district office personnel often assign and reassign people to schools with little apparent knowledge or concern for the impact of these moves on the school as an organization. Many, apparently, do not view or treat schools as organizations--as social systems--rather they often move people in and out of schools, back and forth from schools with little input from the school and less regard for the impact their decisions have upon ongoing programs and efforts. In a word, they seem to view schools as if they were comprised of heaps or jumbles of individuals, rather than groups or systems of people. They tend to treat school people as if they were replaceable parts, interchangeable units, individual laborers to be shifted on a moments notice rather than as members of a social system where inclusion, socialization and belonging are important aspects of effectiveness and satisfaction. And those central office personnel who do view school as systems are often frustrated and demoralized by the constant barrage of pressures and demands that hinder the careful selection and placement of personnel.

In sum, isolation in urban schools is related to (1) the apparent lack of collaborative skills among members--some do not know how to work together effectively, (2) the school's structures and procedures which often limit the opportunities for collaborative work, (3) the norms surrounding teaching and schooling which often do not support collaboration and (4) the attitudes and practices of school districts which treat schools as heaps of individuals rather than social systems.

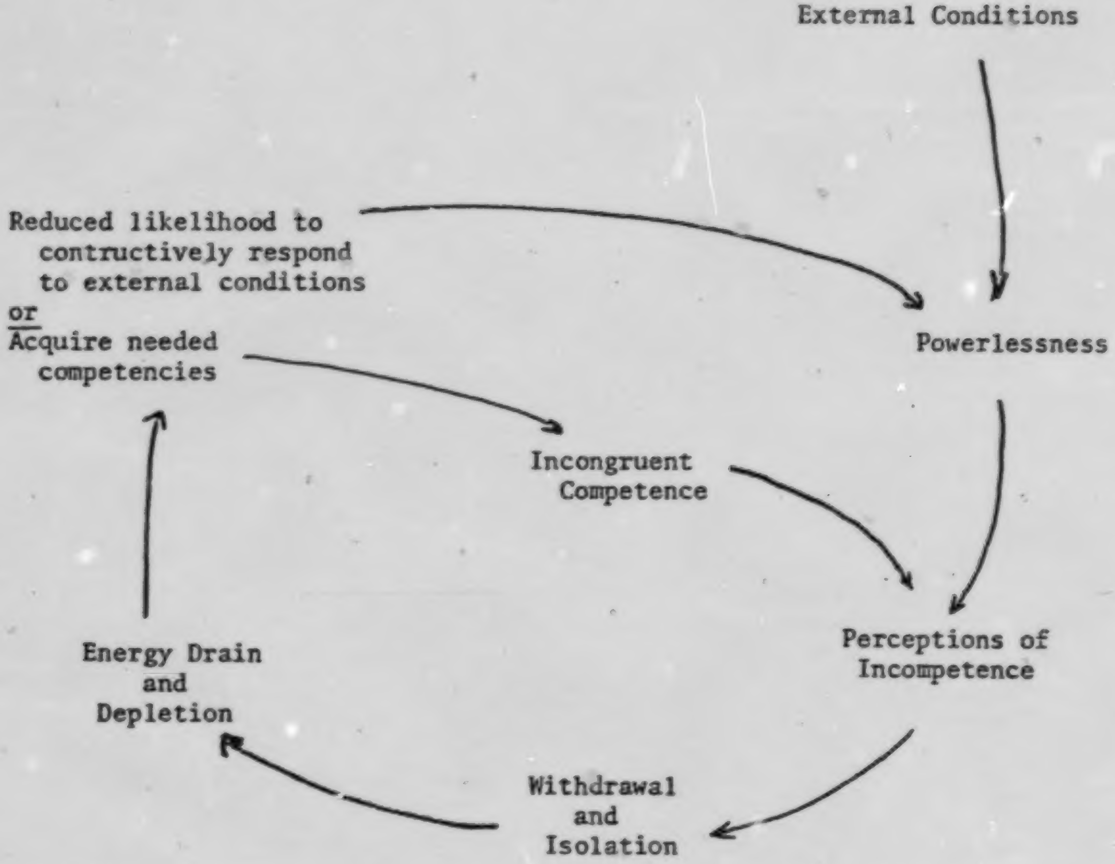
The Vicious Cycle of Recurrent Frustration

The present conditions in urban schools combine and interact in a cyclic way to deplete the school's capacity to respond to problems. The cycle is displayed in Figure 1 and may be described as follows. The press from external conditions, demands, and regulations result in perceptions of helplessness, hopelessness, and depersonalization which combine to produce a pervasive sense of powerlessness. The sense of powerlessness, in turn, interacts with incongruent competence to create feelings of incompetence in teachers and administrators, a condition which leads to withdrawal from colleagues and more extreme isolation. This isolation reduces the frequency of collaborative efforts and collegial exchange resulting in greater energy drain on individual educators and lowering the cooperative energy available to the system. This energy drain decreases the likelihood that the system's resources can be brought to bear in dealing with external conditions

Figure 1

The Cycle of Recurrent Frustration

In Urban Schools


External Conditions
Reduced likelihood to contructively respond to external conditions
or
Acquire needed competencies
Powerlessness
Incongruent Competence
Perceptions of Incompetence
Energy Drain and Depletion
Withdrawal and Isolation

or in acquiring needed competencies. And so the cycle continues and perpetuates itself in an ever-downward spiral creating a climate of recurrent frustration and failure in urban schools.

The task of the consultant then becomes one of breaking this vicious cycle, helping school people to experience initial successes and strengthening the school's capacity to respond to its problems in effective ways. In some cases, this may require helping a group identify their needs and then linking them with outside resources and expertise. In others, it may include helping a group say no to an innovation or program and assisting them in regrouping and improving what they do have. In all instances, it includes helping school people identify their common problems, common tasks, and common plight--identify their interdependence--and build a sense of togetherness and common purpose.

In the papers that follow, cases are given where process consultation was used to effect school improvement and change. The cases differ on the strategies used, the groups worked with at the school site, the problems focused on during the consultation, and the degree in which they succeeded in helping a system build a capacity for sustained problem solving. But they all were confronted with the dilemmas associated with the cycle of recurrent frustration in urban schools.

REFERENCES

Brickman, W. and S. Lehrer. Education and the many faces of the disadvantaged. New York. Wiley and Sons, 1972.

Hummel, R. C. and J. M. Nagle. Urban Education in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Kruszynski, Eugene. "The nature of urban education." School and Society, March, 1970.

Lightfoot, Alfred. Education in Social Perspective. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978.

Lightfoot, Alfred. Urban Education in Social Perspective. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972.

McCullough, Tom. Urban Education: It's No Big Thing. Urban Education, 9, 2,July 1974.

Rist, Ray C. The Urban School: A Factory for Failure. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.

Schmuck, R., P. Runkel, J. Arends, and R. Arends. The second handbook of organization development in schools. Palo Alto: Mayfield Press, 1977.

Vairo, Philip and William Perel. Urban Education: Problems and Prospects. New York: McKay Company, 1969.

Developing Renewal Processes Within Urban High Schools

by

Marc Bassin, Thomas Gross, and Patricia Jordan

High School Renewal Project
New York, New York

The problems of inner-city schools are legion; their dismal state is reported virtually every day in the mass media. Vandalism and crime are on the increase, school reading scores are on the decline, and everywhere alienation is high both for adults and the students. Nonetheless, in recent years, at least a quarter of the high schools of New York City have demonstrated some success in overcoming some of their massive problems. What is it that is going on in these schools?

Four years ago, Renewal began in what may be characterized as a typical South Bronx High School of 5,000 students. Ninety-five percent of the students were reading two or more years below grade level. In addition, fifty percent of the students were dropping out of school by the end of two years.

Student frustration and alienation were not the only problems of the school. The teacher union in the school was strong and generally antagonistic. There had been a succession of three principals in three years. Other problems evident in the school were the lack of adequate security, the lack of discipline, smoking of pot and cigarettes in the halls, selling of drugs in and around the school, low percentages of students passing the regents, exams, poor morale and lack of innovation among staff, and an outdated-ten year old curriculum.

Today, largely through the influence of Renewal, many of the problems outlined above are disappearing. As a result, the current principle is an extremely strong advocate of Renewal. Renewal in the school is a highly structured planning, diagnosing, and implementation activity that involves an active core group of approximately 16 members (administration, faculty, students, and parents) and a peripheral group of 10 to 15. The peripheral group's involvement is chiefly with Renewal projects. Among the accomplishments of Renewal projects are a totally reorganized structure for the ninth grade--a mini-school, a thriving career center, a student newspaper, an ethnic cultural arts program, a video tape feedback program for teachers, and one of the few in-house school evaluation committees in New York City high schools.

A recent completion of the second school-wide diagnosis, performed by 60 individuals during two after school meetings, resulted in the creation of four new task forces on Renewal. One task force is organizing a student Renewal class. Another is initiating Renewal in the 40 person English department. The third is the principal's administrative cabinet devoting a number of meetings to strengthening Renewal. And Renewal in the fourth task force guides a new base line data project of the school. That project provides longitudinal data for the school's long-range planning--resulting much from the Renewal processes, the project has moved the school to a computer-assisted attendance system. Presently the school is virtually self-renewing and only occasional visits are necessary from external Renewal consultants.

What is unique about the improvements and hundreds of others like them taking place in thirty-one Renewal Schools, are not the products of the changes themselves, but rather the processes by which the improvements are brought about. The improvements are a result of efforts made by those within the schools with minimal external assistance. In an era of desperately needed improvements and declining resources for inner-city schools, this type of Self-Renewal Process is especially worthwhile.

Renewal in the Turbulent Context of Inner City Schools

The earlier real life example of collaborative and systematic planning in a New York City high school grew out of a carefully designed school Renewal program. The methodological guide for the planning efforts in the school, the Renewal Process, strives to improve the self-directed, problem solving for an inner-city school. During the past ten years the use of the process has facilitated increased problem solving in twenty-eight high schools and two junior highs in New York City, despite the constraints posed by a turbulent city environment and the massive bureaucracy of an inner-city school district.

Virtually all of the constraints of working in inner-city schools can be found in New York City. The system is gargantuan. In the High School Division alone there are more than one hundred schools; many of which hold more than four thousand students. Each of the schools are of course vulnerable to the extreme socio-economic diversity of the modern city. For example, members of the economically advantaged class continue to move out of the city or to seek private education while increasing numbers of economically disadvantaged minorities continue to move in and to see the public schools as their only hope. Other constraints are raised by yearly cuts in the education budget and the consequent loss of younger individuals in the teaching force.

In the face of these constraints and in light of the research on attempted educational innovations of the 1960's, which showed that even sound new practices were not easily implemented in schools, the Renewal Program developed a model based on the theory and techniques of organization development (OD). While the School Renewal project in New York is not the first attempt to use OD methods in schools it differs from most other efforts in three respects. First it is the largest OD effort in inner city schools anywhere in the world; specifically, there are thirty-one participating schools and all of them are large. Second, it is the largest OD effort in secondary schools. And third, it is the longest lasting OD effort in inner city schools, having operated since 1969.

The purposes of this article are: to explain the methodology of the Renewal Model, its primary processes, and its underlying assumptions; to provide additional detailed examples of school improvement achieved by the Renewal Model; to talk about the results of a recent impartial assessment of the Model; to discuss the major limitations of the Model; and to present the major learnings resulting from the Renewal Program's experience over the past ten years.

How Renewal Works

A few key assumptions pertaining to the nature of inner city schools represent the basis upon which the methods of the Renewal Model were developed. Two assumptions drawn from the OD literature are: (1) that any organization, including a school, has more human resources than it is currently using to engage in "self help" problem solving and (2) that improvements in organizations, particularly schools, should aim to change structures and processes that produce tangible results directly and as soon as possible.

A third basic assumption of the Renewal Model, unique to the New York Renewal Program, is that a credible outside agency is necessary to serve as an external catalyst for school improvement. In the case of this renewal project, the external catalyst was the Economic Development Council (EDC) of New York City.. A staff member of EDC was the orginator of the Renewal concept beginning in 1969 and EDC has been a primary source of funds and support over the last ten years. As a non-profit consortium of business corporations, such as Union Carbide, IBM, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, etc., EDC sought the opportunity in 1969 to work directly with the public schools Its mission since that time has been to provide management support to the public sector as a way of improving the overall climate and well-being of the city. The Board of Education accepted EDC's involvement because of EDC's management experience and expertise, professional credibility, and substantial resources, both financial and human. Upon these assumptions, the Renewal Program has been able to develop a flexible model for Renewal that has proven extremely helpful in guiding change efforts in a variety of educational settings.

The Renewal Model

The Renewal Model involves participatory, systematic planning and problem solving. It calls for all members of the school community (teachers, students, administrators, parents and other staff) as a collective to identify, analyze and develop solutions to school problems. The Process goes through six discrete stages: entry, diagnosis, planning, implementation, evaluation, and institutionalization.

Entry is the set of activities that begins the Renewal process in a school, starting with a nomination by the school's principal to the Renewal Program--sometimes the suggestion of nomination comes from a superintendent. Following the nomination, the acceptance of the school by the Renewal Program is determined by the availability of consultant time as well as other indicators that the school is ready to benefit from Renewal. Following exploratory conferences with the school principal and other key staff, a decision of the school's readiness for participation in the program is made.

If the school is accepted by the consulting group, a Renewal consultant meets with the principal and other key staff to explore the segment of the school that should commence the Renewal process. The unique nature of the school is a determining factor in the selection of which type of Renewal to implement.

Next, the principal, with help from invited or interested staff members and the consultant work together to design procedures for selecting an Internal Renewal Coordinator. The coordinator, whose functions are fully described in the paper by Porterfield and Porterfield, oversees the project. The first task of the coordinator is to enlist the aid of a voluntary committee drawn from the school and its surrounding community. Entry is completed when the consultant, the coordinator, the principal and the committee design the details of the remaining stages of the Renewal Process in terms of who will do what and when.

Entry is one of the most important of all stages and may take anywhere from one month to one year to be successfully completed. Entry activities are also not rigid and the order may differ from school to school. An example of a proposed design offered at entry is show in Figure 1.

Figure I

Example of a Design Proposed at Entry

Phase	Steps - Activities	Objectives	Time line
Entry	Discussions with Principal	1. Explore relationship 2. Determine design	2-3 meetings
	Discussion with Cabinet	1. Franklin-Renewal Program relationship 2. Determine overall design	1 meeting
Diagnosis	Subcommittee of Cabinet Volunteers list & categorize problems	1. List problems 2. Categorize problems 3. Present to Cabinet	1-2 meetings
	Cabinet	1. Modify list 2. Prioritize list or distribute to be prioritized.	1 meeting
	School < Dept. - teachers Any others	1. Identify priorities using categories picked by Cabinet 2. Return to subcommittee	1-2 weeks
	Subcommittee	1. Synthesize data 2. Present to Cabinet	1 week & 1 meeting
	Cabinet	1. Analyze data 2. Organize planning committee	1 meeting
Planning	Planning subcommittee	1. Develop objectives 2. Develop alternative implementation strategies	1-3 meetings
Research & Development		3. See what other schools have done 4. Recommendations for Implementation 5. Recommendations for Evaluation	
Implementation	Cabinet	1. Modify recommendations 2. Implement plan	1 meeting
Evaluation	Subcommittee ↓ Cabinet	1. Evaluate program 2. Recommend modifications to Cabinet	Ongoing

Diagnosis is the data collection or needs assessment stage of Renewal. The committee decides upon issues of concern about which to collect data, carries out an extensive survey of the issues, and thereby makes a diagnosis of the school problems. Several methods of collecting data are used to produce both opinion data and baseline or quantitative data. Most common among the collection methods are survey instruments, group brainstorming, interviews and observation. The data are also used by the Renewal committee to establish priorities for planning.

Planning involves developing ideas and programs to solve priority problems. It consists of five steps. First, potential implementers of programs are invited to participate in the planning process. This is done to avoid the eventual difficulty of such people not wanting to cooperate in implementaion because of a lack of ownership of the plans. Second, research and development is carried out by examining effective practices relevant to the issues in question that are being employed elsewhere. Third, an action plan is created that includes a carefully phrased set of objectives, an accountability scheme, and a specific time line listing tasks and people. Fourth, an evaluation procedure is established for modifying and improving the action plan while it is being implemented. And finally, administrative approval is sought to assure that the project is consonant with the goals of the school and to enlist the support of the administration in facilitating implementation of the action plans.

Implementation represents the culmination of the planning process. It involves putting into effect the action plans. On the surface, implementation appears relatively simple if the other steps have been followed. But implementation of encounters resistance--sometimes due to political problems in the school; other times due to poor management procedures. The external Renewal consultant can be especially helpful in facilitating the prevention or resolution of problems about implementation. For example, Renewal committees often find fault with the principal for what they perceive as a lack of support at that stage. Principals, on the other hand, often tend to view the committees as another pressure group that must be balanced among others. These perceptions can lead to hostilities between committees and principals that oblige the external consultant to act as intermediary between both groups. More will be said about the work of the external Renewal consultant later in this article.

Evaluation procedures are primarily focused on an ongoing formative assessment. Their purpose is to support, modify and improve implementation of the action plan.

Maintenance and institutionalization are the final stages of the Renewal Process. They entail a decreasing dependence on the external consultant and an increasing degree of responsibility for the Renewal Coordinator and the planning committee to generate new planning cycles that will involve additional members of the school and the community. Institutionalization of the Renewal Process requires that the Renewal committees demonstrate a successful record of accomplishment and are considered a regular part of the school's organizational structure. Maintenance is operationally defined as the point at which the external consultant is used only when needed. Usually this last stage takes two to three years to develop.

The Entire School Becomes the Target for Renewal

The Renewal Model's flexibility is a consequence of its aim to establish multiple planning teams within the school. Four sub-systems, or levels, of the school organization seem most appropriate. The first is a school-wide committee which is made up of representatives from the entire school and the community. The committee examines a number of school-wide problems continually. The second sub-system is a student committee which usually is a special class for credit in which school-wide problems are examined. The third appropriate sub-system, a committee within an academic department, focuses only on problems within the department. The fourth sub-system, the administrative team, functions in either of three ways: (1) examining and trying to solve school-wide problems; (2) striving to improve its own team work through self-analytic OD methods; or (3) focusing on methods for individual improvement of each administrator.

These four sub-systems for Renewal can provide a vehicle for simultaneously improving various components of the school and for expanding Renewal systematically throughout the school over time. Equally important, they provide resiliency for the Model. For example, on a number of occasions we have had to abandon Renewal efforts with the staff on the school wide level due to lack of interest or severe political (union) opposition. On such occasions, instead of pulling out of the school, we began work with other sub-systems, usually students or the administration. Success on these levels have often created enough interest and enthusiasm for a return to the previous level. While the ideal, that of successfully carrying out Renewal on all four levels, has only been attained in one school, several schools are carrying out Renewal processes on two or three levels at this time.

Pragmatic Aspects of the Renewal Process

Since the climate of the inner-city school is often not supportive of any significant change, the Renewal Process must be viewed by the school's participants as being pragmatic. One way Renewal committees try to accomplish this is by facilitating the accomplishment of significant school improvements within a short time period. Three aspects of the Model highlight its potentiality for being viewed as pragmatic. First, it is flexible, allowing for a variety of application considering the uniqueness of an individual school. Committee participants in any given school need only select from the range of alternatives those that seem most appropriate to their own situation. Next, the Model is sensitive to the political dynamics of the school organization. The Renewal consultant is trained to be skilled in warding off and, if necessary, mediating conflict between interest groups or individuals. Finally, the Process aims to help the Renewal committee establish early credibility through the achievement of speedy results, usually within the first five months. Our experience has been that within that time frame, siginifcant results, as perceived by the clients, have been implemented in the majority of the Renewal schools.

Roles in the Renewal Model

Many individuals play different roles in the carrying out of the Renewal Model. Some are internal and some are external to the Renewal school. The effectiveness of Renewal is supported by the careful definition of these complementary roles.

The Renewal Consultant is a process consultant skilled in OD who is external to the school and responsible to work with staff members to train the planning committee and the coordinator and to facilitate each stage of the Renewal Process. Unlike most efforts at process improvement and organization development in schools, training occurs primarily on-site during the actual execution of the Renewal Process. The consultant plans each step of the process collaboratively with the coordinator, the committee and the principal. The consultant also advises the group on substantive alternatives that might be tried during each stage of the process.

The Renewal Coordinator is the internal staff person who receives some limited released time (usually one or two periods less teaching time per day) to manage and facilitate the Renewal project in the school. Effectiveness in this role is pivotal to the success of Renewal in the school. The coordinator functions both as the daily manager of the project (the Chairperson of the Renewal Committee) and as an internal OD consultant. The coordinator works closely with the external consultant, the principal, and all constituencies of the school to move the Renewal process forward. The importance of this key role in the model represents a significant departure from most other OD attempts in schools which rely primarily on external consultants. A more detailed description of this unique role appears in the article that follows.

The Principal is a necessary participant in the Renewal effort. The principal's active support and involvement in Renewal are particularly essential during entry and implementation. During entry, as expectations and group agreements are clarified, the principal must assure that the initiation of Renewal in the school is an open process. And during implementation, as action plans are tried, the principal must actively support the new activities and enlist support from key individuals who play a role in implementation and evaluation.

The Renewal Committee is a voluntary group (created to assure an open process) comprised of teachers, other staff, students, administrators and sometimes parents. Ideally, it includes members with informal influence in the school so that they may use such influence to involve others and to reach out to the more reluctant staff members.

The Corporate Representative, an executive from a company that is a member of EDC, such as IBM or Con Edison, works with the Renewal committee as a liaison to the company. The corporate representative attempts to provide company resources that support the planning processes of the Renewal committee. For example, corporate representatives have participated in career awareness programs; have developed job opportunities for students; and have contributed small grants of money to support weekend workshops for planning, training and evaluation.

An Assessment of the Renewal Process

In January, 1977 an external Assessment Team was contracted to conduct an objective evaluation of the Renewal Program in the high schools. In addition, an ongoing formative assessment was conducted by the Renewal consultants themselves. In this section, the major findings of the external assessment are presented first followed by a synthesis of the learnings from both the external and internal assessments.

The Research Design of the External Assessment

Dr. Kenneth Sole, a social psychologist and organizational development consultant, headed the seven member outside assessment team. Through collaboration with the Renewal consultants, the Assessment Team selected a representative sample of twelve of the twenty four schools participating in Renewal. All schools who were asked for permission to take part in the assessment agreed to fully participate. Data were collected primarily from participants involved in the Renewal process by questionnaires, interviews and observations.

The research design had two significant limitations. First, it lacked quantitative rigor because of the absence of the pre-evaluation data. Next, the sample was small. It averaged 10-12 individuals per school since only staff members who participated in Renewal were sampled. These limitations were considered justified since the Assessment Team had only nine months to assess such a vast project. Consequently, the criterion which guided collection of assessment information was that data should be readily accesible and useful for the improvement of the Renewal Model and the improvement of the individual Renewal projects in the sample schools. This criteron was met by surveying the opinions of the Renewal participants themselves.

Findings Concerning Renewal Processes

The Assessment Report submitted by Dr. Sole's team found Renewal to be functioning fully and actively in all of the sample schools. While most Renewal participants could not clearly specify all of the steps of the sequential process, the assessment consultants found that all stages of the process had been employed in each of the sampled schools. The major weakness of the Renewal Process was that the Renewal committees rarely had more than fifteen staff members really involved in action planning and only four of the schools involved more than thirty school participants in carrying out Renewal projects at any time. Although the report questioned the impact of Renewal with limited participation it also found that even the relatively small committees did make contributions that were considered significant by the majority of school participants who were surveyed. In relation to the consultants, uniformly they were considered to be effective by their clients and were asked to be available more often than they possibly could be.

While the Assessment report is comprehensive, an even more complete perspective on the dynamics of the Renewal Process, including benefits and constraints of working at the different levels can be gleaned from putting together the external Assessment with the ongoing internal formative assessment. The following data summarize such a synthesis in terms of the execution of the Renewal process in the four target sub-systems of a high school: a school-wide committee which is representative of all constituencies, a student committee, a committee in an academic department and an administrative committee.

1. School-wide Renewal (a committee usually comprising teachers, administrators and other staff)

Case example. One Renewal committee had been operating at a modest level of accomplishment for a year and a half and then put considerable effort into organizing a planning weekend involving fifteen staff and fifteen students. One dramatic result was a school-wide reading campaign with rewards, including status, for reading books, and coordinated effort at incorporating reading instruction in the content area subjects; hundreds of students were postively affected within the first few months.

Benefits overall. (a) Most schools demonstrated that a new structural vehicle for participative planning had been institutionalized. (b) All staffs reported the discovery of previous untapped talents within the school and its surrounding community. (c) Most staffs reported more open communication among all segments of the school-community.

Constraints overall. (a) Many staff commented that time was too short for adequate meeting and planning. (b) The school-wide committee experienced pressure to implement projects within a short time frame in order to establish credibility. (c) Relations between the committee and the principal at times were strained either because the principal felt the committee was threatening his power or because the committee felt that the principal was not sufficiently supportive of agreed upon implementation. (d) As the committee attempted to implement change it often encountered resistance from staff members who had not been involved in the renewal process.

2. Student Renewal (a committee of students usually organized as a subject class)

Case example. In a school where Renewal had not been effective with a staff committee a student Renewal committee was organized as a class, as an attempt to intervene in another sub-system of the school. During the first semester of operation the class of twenty students, grades nine through twelve included, implemented a variety of projects including the following: an opinion survey of all students in the school, the designation of school spirit as the Renewal priority, a "Respect Yourself" rally and assembly involving all students in the school, a Student-Faculty Rap Session focussing on communications and involving all the faculty, several student-faculty softball games, a student-faculty art show and a monthly newsletter reporting on Renewal News. In their Evaluation Report to the principal, the Renewal students expressed pride in their accomplishments and appreciation in having learned "leadership skills which we can carry with us throughout life."

Benefits overall. (a) Students, in general, were highly interested in improving their schools. (b) In a few schools the success of students motivated a hitherto demoralized faculty. For example, in one school the students initiated a course evaluation project for which 80 percent of the faculty volunteered. (c) Students often worked faster than faculty since they experienced fewer time constraints.

Constraints overall. (a) In some schools it was difficult to organize a student committee which represented a cross-section of students. (b) Students tended to have low credibility with the staff of most of the sampled schools. (c) Student committees tended to change their membership significantly from year to year.

3. Department Renewal (a committee within an academic department)

Case example. After Renewal had had several successful years in this school functioning on the school-wide, administrative and student levels the opportunity presented itself to make the attempt on the departmental level also. A former Renewal coordinator had become the chairman of the English Department. Applying the Renewal Model and involving all of the faculty in her department the chairman was able to organize a project which developed new curricula standards and objectives for the first time in fifteen years. The outcome has been a far reaching modernization of the entire English Department's curriculum so that it better fits the needs of the underachieving student, so common in their school.

Benefits overall. (a) Improvements were shown to occur in both the process and task aspects of department functioning in the majority of schools. (b) Some process improvements included: (1) improved leadership performance of chairman through feedback from staff, (2) improved departmental meetings, and (3) increased use of other departments as resources. (c) The improvements in task accomplishment focussed on the effective execution of curriculum change.

Constraints overall. (a) It was difficult to organize departmental Renewal because of infrequent formal meetings. Departments met once a month for forty minutes and the teachers rarely had a common free period when they could meet. (b) The Renewal consultants were limited by time, making it difficult to serve more than two or three Renewal levels in a school simultaneously. Since Departmental Renewal was rarely attempted until the Renewal Process was already ongoing, it automatically became difficult for the consultant to initiate it. (c) Because of these constraints, departmental Renewal has been the rarest to occur. Of the thirty participating schools, each with 6-9 departments, there were only 2-3 departments in total utilizing Renewal.

4. Administrative Team Renewal (organization development with the administrative team alone)

Case example. After participating in the Renewal systematic planning process, the administrative team of this school designated three areas of work for improvement and then developed action plans for each. The problem areas were as follows: revising security procedures to reduce class cutting and vandalism; streamlining meetings to increase the effectiveness of decision-making; and creating new supervisory procedures to provide increased support to teachers in the classroom. In their own evaluation of the first year, the team found significant progress made in each target area.

Benefits overall. (a) Speedy actions to improve school-wide processes were frequently facilitated by working with the top administration. (b) The functioning of administrative teams was improved in terms of their meetings, decision-making, planning and implementation.

Constraints overall. (a) The time for the assistant principals to be involved became severely limited especially during recent years when the schools suffered extreme budget cuts and the assistant principals (including chairman) had to pick up responsibilities previously covered by teachers. (b) Improving the functioning of any administrative team became a threatening process in many schools. Principals and assistant principals often were reluctant to engage in the necessary self-examination.

Findings Concerning Renewal Products

Planning for Renewal in the thirty-one participating schools produced scores of educational changes affecting thousands of students. While this may appear to be a bold claim, it must be placed in perspective. In one third of the Renewal schools, staff members of these school believe that the implemented actions are having only a minimal impact. In another one third of the schools Renewal efforts are rated in the middle ground of effectiveness, that is to say while some important projects have implemented the staff members of these schools feel that the projects are either too few, or have been very difficult to implement. The last third of the Renewal schools have succeeded in implementing effective projects in an ongoing manner with the simultaneous involvement of several subsystems in those schools.

The products of of successful Renewal projects can best be summarized in three categories: structural changes within the school organization; programmatic improvements or additions; and administrative modifications. What follows is a brief sampling of each.

Structural changes. (a) Changing the format of the monthly faculty meeting from a large group meeting to small group discussions under the direction of teacher-facilitators; (b) Creating new roles in the school such as a proposal writer and a project funding officer; and (c) Establishing mini-schools for ninth graders to assist them in the transition to high school.

Programmatic improvements. (a) Providing career resource programs to introduce students to the world of work; (b) Writing new curricula especially in basic skill areas such as reading and math; and (c) Introducing teaching innovations such as peer mediated instruction.

Administrative modifications. (a) The single area of administration which has received the most attention from Renewal committees has been campus security. Renewal committees in cooperation with administrators have demonstrated that usually without extra resources the school, itself, can reorganize and improve its security procedures; and (b) Another priority has been to improve programming procedures in view of thousands of changes that one school will often process in one semester. These changes usually are the consequence of transient student propulations.

Limitations of the Renewal Process in Inner-City Schools

The Renewal Process rarely persuades the majority of a faculty that significant positive change can occur on that it has begun. In spite of its favorable track record, in many schools, staff members believe that while the individual accomplishments of a Renewal Process are helpful, the problems of the schools are so immense that much more is necessary than a self-help approach from within. That pessimism grows out of the many failures at educational innovation during the sixties and the school budget cuts of the seventies. Morale is also at an all time low in inner-city schools. During the last ten years many teachers have been laid off and those remaining have been required to work more and at virtually frozen salary levels. That kind of working condition presents a severe burden for participants. Overworked means little time to contribute to Renewal. Within the context of the Renewal Process, that means Renewal participants must sustain their project even though it does not develop in a consistent manner over time. Failures are also inherent to the process of change. In addition, political obstacles need be negotiated and lack of cooperation or sabotaged from uninvolved others in the school need be turned around.

Perhaps the most difficult point of conflict, and unfortunately not uncommon, concerns the relations of the Renewal committee and the principal. The principal of an inner-city school is confronted with an overwhelming job. The educational, political, organizational and financial problems connected with running an inner city school are staggering. Understandably, principals and Renewal committees sometimes fail to establish an effective working relationship. Principals sometimes feel that the committees are encroaching on their locus of authority. On the other hand committee members frequently believe that principals are defensive and not facilitative enough of the process of implementing Renewal projects.

The Renewal Process in Perspective

The Renewal Model as we have applied it in New York City has proven to be a viable method for improving the quality of education in inner city secondary schools. As a program it operates, to date, in approximately 25 percent of the city's one hundred eleven high schools and is expanding to other high schools, junior high and elementary schools. While the schools are large, the Renewal Model has incorporated methods that permit penetration of the four major sub-systems of the school community. Using a comprehensive approach the Renewal Model has resulted in numerous improvements in administrative procedures, organizational structures and educational programs.

The Renewal process has become institutionalized in three related domains. In one third of the individual Renewal schools the Renewal process is in operation within two or more subsystems and is supported externally by only occasional visits from the Renewal consultants. The Renewal process within these schools do not operate in a vacuum; the external support systems continue to provide ongoing support. The external catalyst, the Economic Development Council of New York City, continues -- indefinitely — to provide that support financially, expertly and psychologically. While EDC continues to be involved in Renewal, the Board of Education increasingly has assumed the financial burden of Renewal in spite of severe city-wide budget cuts in recent years. The Board pays the salaries of four of six Renewal consultants whereas two years ago they paid for none. The Board also provides a research and development budget to each participating school. Increasingly, the central office superintendents are becoming advocates of Renewal as well.

The effectiveness of the Renewal Program in assisting schools to improve themselves and its success in becoming institutionalized in the schools, in the Board of Education and in the Economic Development Council, are primarily due to four factors. The first is the concept of the external catalyst. The Economic Development Council applied a powerful, positive leverage for change in the schools through the application of considerable human and financial resources from the business community. Their contribution has been sensitive enough that the school people who have worked with them have not felt patronzied but rather, partners in an exciting experiment that has promised, and delivered, improved education for the studnnts. The school people also now feel that the walls of isolation around the schools that they have become accustomed to are breaking down. This has aided to improvement of their morale.

Second, the Renewal Model goes to lengths to specify the processes of entry, the manner in which a school should begin Renewal, and to tailor the subsequent processes to the particular school. Our experience has been that entry processes are essential to the later effectiveness of Renewal in a school. At the core of entry are the following: the principal's support for Renewal, the voluntary nature of the Renewal committee and the collaboration of all participants with the consultant in creation of a Renewal design suited to the unique nature of the individual school. These processes permit the participants to have ownership of their own Renewal project as well as a clear management plan for its execution. We believe the results in doing that leads participants to a strong commitment and a high probability of successful implementation of school improvements.

The third critical factor in the effectiveness of the Renewal Program is that aspect of the Renewal Model which specifies the development of Renewal teams in different sub-systems or levels of the school. Our discovery has been that being able to function with Renewal in various sub-systems of the school increases the number of significance of outcomes as well as the power and flexibility of the Renewal process in helping schools to assist themselves. If Renewal is stymied on one level we have found that often it can be successfully undertaken on another. Returning to the other level is always possible as those individuals become re-motivated. The flexibility of moving from level to level is the most effective way we have found in overcoming political obstacles to Renewal. Most often these political obstacles, such as union opposition, can be turned into political supports if and when the efficacy of Renewal can be demonstrated. Moving to different levels and attaining success permits that demonstration.

Finally, the role of the internal coordinator has been essential to success of the Renewal process in the individual schools and to its ability to become institutionalized. The Renewal coordinator assumes primary responsibility for maintaining the Renewal project in the school as the Renewal school develops a strong record of accomplishment and the support from the external consultant is deliberately cut back.

Perhaps the ultimate learning from the experiences of the Renewal Program, beyond the five just mentioned, is that the effort at improving complex social systems such as schools is a humbling, exciting, rewarding and endless task. Renewal, be definition, is a necessary function for these organizations. Research findings from applied behavioral science on how to do Renewal even better are desperately needed.

Functions of School-Based Renewal Coordinators

by

Robert W. Porterfield and Ilah J. Porterfield

High School Renewal Project
New York, New York

Ten years of organization development (OD) in New York City High schools has shown that a sine qua non for improving the educational climate of urban schools is the role of the school based Renewal coordinator. We have performed the role in a couple of New York City high schools and understand some role behaviors that will work and some that will not. To accentuate the positive, we focus here on those functions that we have performed that enhanced the Renewal processes in our respective schools.

As was described in the article, by Bassin, Gross, and Jordan, the school based Renewal coordinator is pivotal to helping schools develop a process for systematic, participative and planned change. The backbone of the Renewal Model is the designation of the school-based Renewal coordinator as the school's mentor of the planning and change processes. That very designation contributes to the legitimization of on-going, planned change.

It is one thing, of course, to legitimize the process of change, and another to accomplish significant change. Beyond the designation of two general functions: (1) the manager of a planning and implementation project, and (2) the facilitator of the associated processes of planning and implementation, the skills of administrator and internal OD consultant are required. In that sense, the role is unique when contrasted with the traditional coordinator in a high school. The latter administers an ongoing project and reports directly to one of the assistant principals. In the role of renewal coordinator, we reported directly to the principal, and, as a consequence, had a school-wide locus of authority that was not limited to a single instructional domain. Yet in our work, we discovered that the effectiveness of the role was reduced because we did not have the formal, line authority of an assistant principal. We had come out of the teaching ranks and as renewal coordinators had greater informal referent power than most assistant principals. However, we quickly discovered that without formal line authority, an effective coordinator must possess skills in leading the volunteer renewal committee and in negotiating as an equal with people higher up in the organization. Those skills coupled with the responsibilities and functions of the renewal coordinator combined to enhance the renewal process in our schools.

We now turn to a close examination of those functions starting first with our two primary functions and then describing those functions that are key to the renewal process. We conclude the paper with a discussion of how we maintained support for our efforts and a brief assessment of limitations to our effectiveness.

Our Primary Functions

Operating as renewal coordinators, our concerns centered on both the renewal programs of our schools and the processes that accompanied the programs. The overarching goal of the programs was school improvement.

To accomplish the general goal of school improvement we chose to create a new subsystem in our schools, the renewal committee. To accomplish this, we relied on managerial skills such as public relations work to advertise the new program and OD consultation skills such as convening meetings, teaching problem solving techniques and the like. In the following sections, we define the specific characteristics of the functions and use examples from our work to highlight those characteristics.

Organizing the Renewal Committee

Our first task was to form a renewal committee that was a microcosm of the school. That is to say representatives on the committee were to be recruited from the school's different departments, the administrative cabinet, the student body and the community. Forming a committee from such divergent groups is not an easy task. We were asking people who had low levels of trust for one another to give up their own time--very often after school--to sit and talk to one another about school wide problems. The task became particularly difficult when we first convened the forty-five or so members of the committee.

At that first meeting, rather than focusing on school issues, many members of the committee turned their energies to blaming one another for the school's problem. We were compelled to divide the committee into homogeneous problem solving groups, that is, all the students were placed in one group, all the parents in another and so forth. In those groups, we asked them to list all the problems that they perceived in the school. Each list was then shared in the larger group. Members were astonished with the agreement found among the lists. Sharing the almost identical lists helped the members to realize that they had common views of the problems and could work together toward a common goal.

Convening Committee Meetings

Convening subsequent task force meetings of the renewal committee was difficult. School schedules are such that teachers and students do not have common periods for such purposes. Furthermore, the members of the business community and parents had other commitments and could meet only on certain days. The business representatives were from the local community as well as large corporations such as Union Carbide.

Fortunately, as we had hoped, the members were willing enough to commit themselves to after-school task force meetings once a week for five weeks. They realized that each task force was to arrive at possible solutions and ultimately present a tentative plan of action for a particular problem or problem area. Impetus for such a decision was based on the fact that the groups had already begun to attack problem areas and desired to complete their tasks. Each session was to last two hours, but during the six week period some groups remained for three hours. At times subgroups of the committees were able to meet during the day, but the bulk of the work was done during these afternoon sessions.

As renewal coordinators, we facilitated each of the task force meetings by informing members of important issues, maintaining records, and assisting the chairperson with convening techniques. After each meeting the coordinator quickly wrote detailed minutes of the meeting. They were typed and approved by the principal then distributed or mailed to the entire faculty, students, parents and business representatives. Included with each set of minutes was an agenda for the next meeting. Each task force chairman gave rough copies to the coordinator who edited and distributed the minutes on the following day. In this way we were able to keep everyone informed of progress, and also enlist new support for the project.

Training Teams in Problem Solving

Our renewal committee was organized into several task forces working on different projects. We convened the committee meetings using the participative leadership skills of process consultation (agenda development, gatekeeping, taking surveys, etc.) and simultaneously we trained the task force leaders in running their groups in a similar fashion. Our goal in modeling participative leadership and in training others to do so was to develop maxiumum commitment at all levels of the renewal project.

In addition, external training sessions and workshops were sponsored by the Renewal Program at their main office as well as in the school. Some task-force leaders were freed from school assignments on non-class days to attend these workshops. For example, one of our Corporate Representatives from Union Carbide provided our school with one workshop session in Synectics--a method of problem solving often used in industry. At this session only the task force leaders and a few selected volunteers were present. The representative of Union Carbide, trained in the process, led the members through a "synectics" exercise using, as an example, a problem area chosen by one of the task-force groups. This workshop later enabled the group to find several creative solutions for scheduling student trips.

For most external training sessions we decided to use one of the problems agreed upon by the task-force members. In one instance, lateness to school and class was one of the prime concerns of parents, teachers, and students and it was chosen as a top priority problem. We briefly explained problem solving techniques and brainstorming before we actually led the group through the process. The group was told that one of the primary ground rules was not "to shoot down" anything that anyone suggested. Keeping this in mind, we asked the groups to suggest as many reasons as they could think up which caused the problem while one member listed them on the board. We often had to keep the group from suggesting any solutions before all the reasons were listed.

Next, we asked for possible solutions. Since most of the reasons had been listed, the group was better able to deal with alternative solutions. In this way we showed that the first solution suggested may not always be the best solution. As the list of possible solutions grew, the group was able to combine several of them and come up with a number of viable alternatives. Finally, the group was asked to rate the plans as to their feasibility. When the members of the large group met in individual task forces, they were given forms headed "Possible Reasons" and "Possible Solutions" and "Feasibility." This enabled the group to continue the process, and to build upon the work of the task force.

Although outside training sessions and workshops were vital, we found that the coordinator was still the primary source of training members and leaders inside the school. We recognized, at the beginning, that this would be the case so we met with all the task-force groups early in the process to guide them through steps of problem solving. Another way in which we were able to train task-force leaders was to meet with them individually during free periods. At this time we would review the agenda with each leader, set objectives for the meeting and discuss techniques the leader might use to facilitate the meeting. Leaders were also taught to share responsibility, so they would not be overwhelmed by too much work. By sharing responsibility each member of the group felt ownership in the plan and became committed to it.

Facilitating Planning and Managing Implementation

Our greatest challenge inevitably came once the plan had been formalized and accepted by the renewal committee. Managing implementation is a complex task at best, but it becomes even more complicated when as renewal coordinator you must deal with political forces and have very little legitimate authority. While as coordinators we could derive some power from the principal, we also had to rely upon the power of the renewal committee as well as our own knowledge of both the formal and informal power structure to get plans implemented.

One specific method which we employed successfully was to use the representative clout of the renewal committee. As chairpersons of the committee, we had direct responsibility for implementation. Since the committee was made up of representatives from all groups, the process was democratic and all factions had a voice in decision making. The ownership of most groups was high, once the committee accepted a plan, and, the principal, as a member of that committee, gave his stamp of approval. Most salient groups were also committed to the implementation of the plan. As chairpersons of the renewal committee, we were seen as representatives of a school-wide committee rather than as "unofficial" supervisors, attempting to usurp the powers and to use the budget of the middle managers.

Another special factor that was related to successful implementation was the relationship established between the renewal commitee and the teachers' union. An uncooperative school-union chapter could, of course, cause an entire project to fail since the union has great power and if its leaders oppose a program that will generally end in failure. For this reason we made sure to get Union approval by including a member of the local chapter's executive board to represent the Union on the renewal committee. Obviously this also engendered ownership on the part of the chapter as well as allayed their fears of objections, for they were dealt with openly by the committee. The result was the commitment of the chapter to our renewal effort.

A Case Example of the Coordinator in Action

To better understand the complex role of the renewal coordinator, it may be helpful to follow one project through the diagnosis, and implementation of stages of a typical renewal effort.

It was our initial diagnosis that one of the weaknesses at one school was the need of Career Education for students. The need was a result of poor student attitudes toward the world of work. Except for three courses in the Secretarial and Accounting Department there was no other career education program at the school. Although, the renewal committee had identified the problem, the task-force leader in charge of the project was weak. Only after a great deal of pressure from us and the committee as well as the assistant principal of her department did she finally, "get out" to visit other schools to see successful programs in other schools.

The assistant principal of the department was a member of this task force.. She made visits and supported the efforts of the task force leader.. Based on these visits, the task group decided to replicate a successful program from another renewal school. This program was the establishment of a Career Center for students.

Once that was agreed upon it was necessary to negotiate space in the school which would be centrally located and available to all students. Space was, unfortunately, at a premium and a room could not be set aside for this. After a number of discussions the librarian, with principal's consent, agreed to setting aside an area of the library for the center.

At this juncture a new "dynamic" task force leader was chosen by the task force and we were able to obatin a special grant, through one of our business represenatives, for furniture and special materials. The center was staffed by a career coordinator and the librarian. Teachers and their classes were invited to come to the center for sessions in career guidance, aptitude testing of students, etc.

As a result of the success of the center, the assistant principal of English decided to institute a course in Career English, in cooperation with the Secretarial Studies department. She also agreed to use the "Choice or Chance" material on career guidance provided by the New York Telephone Company at no cost to the school.

The effects of the center began to snowball. A career day was planned as a follow up activity. Help was provided by the Board of Education Office of Career Education in planning and programming the project. The lack of funding for a luncheon for career speakers and faculty on Career Day surfaced as a problem, but through the intervention of the corporate "reps" we were able to solve this problem.

Career day was only one of the results of the rippling effect of a successful career program established as a result of the renewal program. Because of the success of the center and career day, a person in charge of a federally funded career program was so impressed by the sophistication of our initial success that he offered a special workshop for teachers, funded curriculum writing, and funded the center with the services of a teacher and a paraprofessional aide.

Career Orientation classes, using a portion of the curriculum, were instituted in our mini-school as a required subject. As evidence of their success these classes are now offered in the mainstream as electives. The growth of career education in the school has made the school a model. We are now one of two schools to be chosen to implement a new career program which provides $134,000 worth of resources for our school this year.

The establishment of a career program and its success was initiated by the career task force and was successfully followed over four years by several new task forces that grew from the planning of the renewal core, committee with the support and consent of the principal.

Liaison to the Principal

While the success of the renewal process depends largely on an effective committee, it also requires the active support of the principal. This has been demonstrated by our experience with the renewal efforts over the years. Moreover research in other settings has similarly shown that a successful organization development project requires support from the chief administrators, otherwise effective plans may never be implemented. Thus, the coordinator also functioned as a liaison to the principal.

As such we met with the principal on a regular basis to report progress and problems. But, more important, we had to establish a trust relationship. Forming such a relationship takes time. The principal has a cabinet, comprised of assistant principals, with whom he confers and which functions as his chief advisory group. The fears and concerns of these assistants were often obstacles to building trust with a principal. One of the coordinators was able to build such a strong relationship with the principal that he became the first regular member of the cabinet who was not an assistant principal.

The renewal committee itself also was a catalyst for building trust with the principal. The fact that the committee is represented by all groups including members of the principal's cabinet was a facilitating factor in building a trust relationship since it provided another bridge for the coordinator to the principal. In meetings of the renewal committee, the principal, who had a school-wide outlook, would quickly identify many of the problem areas in the school. Often, the principal tended to move more quickly into problem solving than the other members of the committee and thus destroyed the feeling of ownership for other participants. When this occurred, the coordinator had to explain the rationale of the renewal process again as well as the dynamics and steps of the renewal process itself to him. As coordinators we had to establish the fact that the Renewal Committee was a problem solving group that could identify other problems and suggest viable solutions. If the principal immediately imposed his perceptions of the problems on the committee, it would undermine the group's ownership of the plan.

Securing Required Resources

Planning and implementing change often necessitates the use of resources that are external to the school. Funding is vital to any renewal effort and as the person ultimately responsible for the success of renewal, we, as coordinators, had to find ways to secure resources. If funding was not readily available in the school, we would approach the corporate representatives. The corporate "rep" is an integral part of the renewal model. EDC provides the coordinator with the part-time services of a corporate executive. The function of this helping agent is to assist the coordinators with his or her expertise in solving problems. The corporate "rep" often helped by securing small grants or by helping the task forces in other ways, for example, by providing small printing services, speakers, etc., from industry.

The Economic Development Council, which has administered the school Renewal Project, is a member of the Federal Registry and all coordintors receive summaries of available grants. Although the Board provided the same service, the lead time from the Board of Education is often too short to write a successful proposal. We were asked to become proposal writers for our schools as well as trainers of other in-school proposal writers. We have also conducted proposal writing workshops sponsored by the Renewal Project for other renewal schools.

Funding is, of course, vital to any renewal effort but as resource persons we had to secure both informational and planning services as well. One renewal school was tied into an ERIC system which was available to all schools. The renewal coordinator at that school trained other coordinators and a number of people from their staffs in the use of the ERIC system. We were then able to train our own task force leaders to secure information from the computer for their research and development efforts.

We found other renewal coordinators to be resources for us. Some of their successful programs served as springboards for some of our programs. A Career Center was modelled, for example, after such a center in another school; and a successful mini-school was started after discussions with a coordinator about the problems encountered in implementing a similar project in a member school. We joined another school in a computer project and were able to get a computer of our own. In fact some of our most valuable resources were programs at other schools throughout the area we visited to see special programs.

Through our planning stages and thereafter we maintained supportive relations with the business community. We were able to tap the resources of neighborhood businesses to provide some refreshments for our career day to providing speakers. "Open Doors" which is funded by EDC provides a liaison with industry and helps to bring corporate services into the schools. Through this group we were able to secure the services of speakers for the classrooms and for our Career Day. The telephone company, for example, was instrumental in bringing many programs into the school. As is evident, many resources were available and we learned to take advantage of them. This, we feel, is a result of the Renewal processes which demonstrated that a systematic planned effort could also be applied to developing a variety of resources.

Where We As Renewal Coordinators Sought Support

Since the renewal effort was new to us and our schools, we as renewal coordinators, often needed outside assistance as well as training in managing the entire change effort. The renewal consultant at each school was our first and most important support system. His once a week visit to the school allowed us to discuss our frustrations and concerns with an outside person. We discussed problems such as the reluctance of a principal to implement a project although he previously gave the green light to the plan of the task force. The consultant and coordinator would then meet with the principal on issues with which we as coordinators had been ineffective. The consultant provided advice and on-the-job training in many areas in which we lacked the skills to operate effectively.

Another important support system was the network constituted of Renewal coordinators. This group met on a monthly basis for one half day.

These monthly meetings conducted by the renewal consultants served two important functions. They gave us timely training in specific problems that were common to many of the coordinators in the project. They also gave us a feeling of "belonging." This positive feeling came as a result of realizing that as a coordinator, one was not alone in having problems of managing change. Often, by the end of the monthly meeting, we felt almost euphoric when a pressing problem seemed near solution as a result of the dialogue between coordinators and consultants. At other times we felt relief when the problems at our own school were minor compared to those of several of the other renewal schools.

Another place where we sought support was from the business representative attached to each school. In one instance the renewal committee could not decide on how to divide the scarce resources among the several task forces. The business representative helped facilitate a decision by insisting that since a division must be made, it should be done now. The committee reached closure on the issues shortly after this input. The business representative helped the committee to realize that cost effectiveness was necessary in planning and allocating resources. When faced with a lack of resources such as seed money for a new project, the business representatives were often the first people we contacted. Many times they supplied some monies but more often, they taught us how to find the resources from other sources.

In addition to the coordinator network and on-the-job training by consultants, the project consultants gave summer workshops to acquaint principals, assistant principals, teachers and students with different aspects of the renewal model. Consultants sought and obtained input from coordinators on some of the areas they believed should be emphasized, especially workshops dealing with skills and techniques in OD that the coordinator felt school people lacked. These workshops have been successful for both students, teachers, and administrators as well as coordinators who have become more adept in making change as a result of the summer sessions.

Limitations of Our Effectiveness

One of the most "crippling" limitations on the effectiveness of the renewal coordinator is the reluctance of a principal to support the renewal effort. With this fact in mind and before a school is considered ready for renewal, the renewal consultants interview a principal and examine the intent and scope of the renewal effort. Only until after acceptance by the principal, the renewal project staff and the superintendent are given does the renewal effort begin.

In one of our schools, the original principal was replaced by an acting principal in September. Since principal's in New York City are chosen in part by a parent committee, the acting principal who was an avowed candidate for the permanent principal's position, wished to make no changes in the existing school during his acting year. He also believed the Renewal process was unnecessary, for he felt he and his cabinet already knew the problem areas and if they were unable to find solutions to them, no one else could do so. Implementing projects which the committee had decided upon and to which he had agreed became thorns in our side, for he would not allow the committee to allocate funds for implementation. This involved much of one of the coordinator's time and energy as well as the time of the renewal committee members, corporate "rep" and the consultants'. In many cases, the coordinator, would literally spend hours trying to get the principal to try a sound idea he had previously agreed to implement. Many of these projects were later implemented successfully as a result of the initial work of the task forces. A different candidate was then chosen as the new principal. Fortunately the new principal became a strong supporter of renewal projects in the school.

One of the most significant problems that has recently surfaced, not only in the school where one of the writers was serving as coordinator, but also in many other renewal schools, was a policy on the part of the Unified Federation of Teachers to discourage volunteerism by teachers. This policy encouraged many teachers who were lukewarm or hostile to renewal to use this as a weapon against renewal. The renewal model is based, of course, on the premise of teacher volunteerism and forces that diminish volunteerism similarly hinder renewal efforts. Fortunately, the support and committment engendered by the renewal committee often overcame pressures against volunteerism.

Another serious limitation to our effectiveness, especially during the first two years of Renewal was the fear of departmental assistant principals about the project. They felt "their turf" was endangered. This became difficult when projects encompassed several subject areas and the assistant principal vetoed any project in his department or "sat" on any change. This attitude was not only frustrating to teachers, students, and administrators or the task force, but also to those departmental assistant principals who had been part of the planning and implementation of the project. In many cases, peer pressure by assistant principals or by the principal helped to overcome their resistance and concerns. Department heads soon learned that renewal increased their effectiveness and broadened rather than diminished their power.

One of the most severe limitations on the coordinators' effectiveness is a lack of time. The coordinator teaches three periods a day and spends three periods on renewal. With the myriad of functions that the coordinator must perform, this is hardly enough time for renewal. Meetings alone often take up most of the coordinators free time. The broader the renewal effort in a school the more demands on a coordinators time. We, as coordinators, generally spent more than two hours after the school day on renewal tasks. Even with this extra time an efficient coordinator cannot do many of the things he or she knows will make the project more successful. The rule of a coordinator in a successful school is "run" all day and you may complete 80 percent of what you know you should do. In our experience, this overload is a severe limitation for maximizing the effectiveness of renewal.

Conclusion

We have indicated some of the high points in our experience as renewal coordinators. Our problems and opportunities were shared in many respects by other coordinators in other "renewal" schools. As the coordinators, the principal, and the members of the schools renewal committees gained skill in managing change, so were we able to find more solutions to problems as they emerged. The support of the external consultant, the corporate representative attached to the school, and the support of the coordinator's network helped in our renewal efforts. As a result of the support of the Economic Development Council and the High School Division of the Board of Education, the directors of the project have been able to refine an evolving Renewal model to find techniques to deal with current problems as well as to find new interventions to broaden and deepen renewal in the schools.

We know that renewal still faces problems at the school level, but we also know that the renewal model has offered techniques that enhanced change at the school level and that the schools will continue to seek more efficient methods to deliver needed services to our students.

Process Consultation for School Renewal:

The DTA in a West Coast Urban Community

by

Richard P. Francisco

Center for Educational Policy and Management
University of Oregon

Introduction

Urban schools are plagued by difficulties and problems of all kinds. That point has been well documented in education and educational research. The article by Bell that appeared earlier in this journal focused on some of the unique properties of the urban school organization that create some of the problems and hinder those schools from accomplishing their main mission: the education of urban youth. If urban schools are to overcome the problems and progress to their mission, they are going to need considerable assistance.

In 1975, the National Institute of Education (NIE) awarded a joint contract to the Center for Educational Policy and Management (University of Oregon) and the Center for New Schools (Chicago, Illinois) for a project to study the problems facing urban schools and to provide the schools assistance to solve some of their more pressing problems. The nation-wide project became known as the Documentation and Technical Assistance project in Urban Schools (DTA).

DTA's charge was twofold. The first part studied and documented the problem-solving activities of nine "model" urban school communities throughout the country. The second part of the charge, technical assistance (TA), conveyed some of the documented information of the nine "model" school communities to other urban school communities and helped the other communities to use and tailor the conveyed information for problem solving in their setting. Simply, the DTA was a project that used knowledge about successful problem solving in one school to help another school its own successful capacity for problem solving.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the ways that we in the DTA used process consultation to provide TA to a west coast urban school community. In doing that, we provide background information about our west coast urban setting, speak specifically about the helpful and unhelpful effects of our TA, and share our findings about the modes of process consultation that best suit urban settings.

Background

Initial TA activities consisted of locating an urban school community that might profit from our consultation. As specified in our NIE contract, only those schools in which 50 percent of the students fell below [illegible] guidelines, Title 1 schools, were eligible. After extensive [illegible] we made the decision to conduct TA in a nearby west coast urban school district that contained a number of Title 1 schools.

Spring visits to the district brought optimism. Many key central office administrators, principals, and teachers lauded our proposed work. But getting the TA work started was not as simple as we had hoped.

By autumn, spring optimism turned into pessimism as a number of obstacles slowed progress. We discovered that the district had a new top level administration and was about to go through its third reorganization in as many years. A number of key administrators who earlier had been our proponents were left unsure of the drifts of the political winds during the reorganization and withdrew their support. Some principals confided that although they might profit from working with us, to do so might risk being identified as weak or incompetent by the new administration.

Another factor that hindered the work was that for the most part, principals and administrators in the district were reactive rather than proactive. Their mind set was to move from one crisis to another as each one appeared. The number was unending. Taking measures to avoid a crisis was a notion either not in their cognitive framework or something that had to wait until the disappearance of crisises. Our project hinged on introducing proactive strategies to schools, but in order to do that we first had to develop strategies to get attention away from crisis and on us.

Contract Building and Entry

We were forced to re-evaluate and to change entry strategies several times. The earlier strategies and the problems they posed are not key to this discussion, but in moving from one strategy to the next three issues surfaced that pointed the need for a flexible entry strategy. The issues were: the district's reorganization, the attitudes and power of the school principals, and the ambiguity of our federal contract.

The reorganization of the district contributed both facilitative and hindering elements to our work. On the facilitative side, it provided an avenue for us to become a part of the district. For instance, our project was seen by many school people as being an outgrowth of the reorganization, that gave us the legitimacy to visit any school or to interview any district educator. On the hindering side, the reorganization process eliminated some intact groups. A few were groups that we had contacted and saw as providing an important link in our work. The reorganization also forced some of our political allies to take jobs in other school districts. Others key to our start-up and entry reneged on earlier commitments and took a "wait and see" posture. Also as the reorganization pressed on we were sucked into its service far more than we had intended.

The principals of the west coast district operated their schools in a fashion similar to feudal lords over their fiefs. That statement is not to be condescending or critical, but rather to emphasize the total authority, power and autonomy that was each principal's. As a result, many principals were unaware of or did not care about special school improvement programs sponsored by the central office. Our early negotiations with the central office to secure permission to approach schools about TA work, for awhile, left us with that kind of label: a central office school improvement program. Carrying a tag of that nature did perhaps prompt a few principals to be interviewed by our team, but for the most part, the label--by virtue of its central office association--impeded the entry process. It did not stand alone, however, as cause for a slow and difficult entry into individual schools. Added to the label were principals who held a natural distrust for "research types" (a number of schools were still reeling from past bad experiences with researchers), principals who perceived us as evaluators from the central office, and principals who thought that although our project might provide some new and interesting contributions to their schools, the risk of taking a chance on something untested was too great. Our early courting attempts of school principals were discouraging and time consuming, and past experience had taught us, that without the support of the principal a project as ours would surely fail.

A more serious complication to entry was the ambiguity of our federal contract. It was in constant flux. Parts of it were being written or re-written as the TA work progressed. The ambiguity of the document made the task of interpreting the specific change and mission of the project to potential client groups a difficult one. No doubt at times we gave people the impression of not knowing what we were doing.

Start-Up

Familiarizing ourselves with the district and searching for schools to start TA had taken many months of energy and resources. Yet after nearly a year, we seemed no farther along. After much thought about that condition, some re-designing of an entry strategy, and encouragement from key central office administrators, we agreed to contribute a portion of our efforts toward the new reorganization. At the central office level that meant facilitating training events for essential personnel. Locally it meant providing assistance to four or five schools to help them solve problems imposed by the reorganization. A critierion we intended to use for selecting schools that desired assistance was whether they might benefit from our TA.

The reorganization of the district seemed to have two goals. The first, that we took no part, moved bodies around the district. Some were moved into new jobs and others were simply moved out of the district. The second goal was a revision of all curriculum guides. The guides were revised by teams of educators selected from the schools. A team of community persons reviewed the revisions of the educators and made recommendation to the board of education. Following board approval, the practices in the guide were implemented by the school. A school-based curriculum team of three to five teachers, the principal, and assistant principals had leadership responsibility for the implementation.

The central office sponsored training events facilitated by our team also afforded us opportunities to aquaint ourselves, our project, and our style of training to many principals, school department heads, and seasoned teachers. Soon many of those individuals, excited by the prospects of TA in their school, extended invitations. After a number of school visitations and conferences with principals and their staffs, we selected five to start TA: three elementary, one middle school, and one high school.

The focus of our TA in schools was on the newly formed school-based curriculum teams. We did that to maximize our limited resources and to keep the TA activities manageable. The work itself contained two parts: (1) helping the new teams with their process and training issues, and (2) providing materials, information, people, etc. from the DTA project. Some detailed descriptions are provided in succeeding sections.

Four Modes of Process Consultation

We used four modes of process consultation in our TA. They were data feedback, training, process observation and feedback, and confrontation. Each was explained in article by Schmuck earlier in this journal. In this section we discuss our uses of each of the four modes and evaluate effectiveness.

Data Feedback

We define data feedback as the process of collecting data from the client system through questionnaires or interviews about their concerns, frustrations, needs, desires, etc., and then systematizing and presenting the data to the client group. The client group, with the help of the consultants can then act on the data.

We used some form of data feedback throughout our work in the district. First, in training new assistant principals for the central office. Questionnaires asked the assistant principals to name areas that they felt were most important to their new role. The data were fed back and we outlined areas of their interest that matched our DTA information pool. Data collection and feedback allowed us to say, "The information here is what you asked us to teach, is that correct?" Because the participants chose activities, they had a greater stake in the learning.

We employed a somewhat similar strategy for entry into schools. For each followup visit, we requested a special staff meeting. During the staff meeting we talked about our project, our work in central office, and significant ways that we might tie the two lines of work together. At the end of each meeting we collected information about ways the staff thought their school could profit from DTA and the areas of the project that seemed most useful. The data were presented at a later meeting. When agreements were reached that the data did present a valid picture of staff concerns, we agreed to use the data to guide our work with the school.

We discovered that a more powerful use of data feedback was to use the data to build teams or to solve problems with a team. An example comes from our work in the high school. The primary concerns of the principal were the lack of teamwork in the guidance department and the department's weak organizational structure. After collecting data that included both observations of the organizational procedures and interviews with each member of the department, the principal, and several teachers, we concluded that the principal's assertions were accurate. When we presented the data to members of the guidance department, we discovered that the concerns of the principal were concerns they and others shared. The data enabled the group to see the weakness and strengths of their team. They then agreed to participate in several team building sessions. Our training sessions led to their becoming a more close, cohesive group.

Trust for one another increased and enabled them to make strong agreements about rearranging their organizational structure.

Another example of data feedback for team building occurred in the middle school. There we were faced with the problems of bringing unity and purpose to a newly formed administrative team. Our procedures for data collection were standard. We interviewed team members about their perceptions of the team, their expectations of their roles, what they thought to be the purposes of the team, and what they thought to be the principal's expectations for the team. When the data were fed back, they expressed much surprise and almost relief that they were in considerable agreement about their concerns. The data were discussed and poured over for several meetings. Soon the group was at a point to act on their concerns and to make the necessary changes to put together an effective team.

Our uses of data feedback were valuable first steps to renew the urban school organization. Data feedback as an entry strategy into schools obtained a commitment from the staff that it was all right for us to work in their school. Data feedback proved to be an effective mode to build urban school teams. And data feedback showed the urban educators our limitations--what we could or could not do. In addition we learned that data feedback in urban settings needs care and proper timing for feeding back the data. For example, when we first delivered our data to the high school guidance department, we had no idea that they were not quite ready for our detailed and frank account about their organizational operations. We did not realize at the time how low their level of trust was for each other and outside consultants. At the feedback session, the group became suspious and defensive. Some thought that we were siding with the principal. Others assumed that because of our central office connection, we were sent from downtown to "straigthen them up." We were forced to abandon the data for many sessions and work on the issue of trust between ourselves and the client group.

A final word for outside consultants is that urban school settings, unlike corporations and other businesses, do not lend themselves to using data feedback as the only mode of an intervention. For example, sometimes when an outside consultant is called into a corporation to diagnose problem areas, he collects data, feeds it back in written or verbal form, make recommendations and then departs. The corporation takes the data and uses it as a start for problem solving. From our experiences in urban schools we can safely state that if an outside consultant were to conduct data feedback in an urban school in that manner, his report would find a home under a stack of other reports. The consultant's hard work of data collection would have been for naught. Data feedback in urban schools needs to be followed up by one of the other modes of process consultation.

Training

Training teaches new skills to the client group. Our training focused on group processes, specifically group processes in small teams. For example, we trained all our teams in the processes of organizing and conducting skillful meetings. We explained that an integral part of effective teamwork stemmed from effective meetings. Effective meetings mean having someone skilled and trained to run them effectively, having members contribute to the agenda and share ideas during the meetings, and having everyone participate in the decision making.

Another part of our process training considered issues of collaboration. We encouraged the new assistant principals to get on the telephone often and to share new ideas and thoughts with their colleagues in other buildings. Other efforts at collaboration were tried in our elementary schools. On the curriculum teams that had parent representatives, we introduced the notion that parents and teachers could work as equals. Parents, we explained have many useful insights into student behavior problems as well as fresh ideas about implementing new curriculum programs. In addition, we pointed out that collaboration did not have to be limited to formal meetings. Collaboration is a process that at its best happens throughout all parts of the school.

We provided in our training methods to diagnose the school environment. That included teaching individuals the process of pinpointing internal resources and critically reaching out from the school for external resources. For example, all schools that we facilitated were part of a pilot program to refine a new curriculum and implement that curriculum. We suggested that a beneficial part of refining would be to check the needs for implementation. For instance, the districts central office demanded that each implementation phase have an evaluation as part of it. In order to do evaluation, the school needed to have some kind of measurements.

The central office was willing to provide a few, but left the final decision of instrumentation to each school. We suggested that since the implemented curriculum was unique for each school, a unique diagnostic instrument would provide the most accurate evaluation. However, to design such, requires the talents of a skillful individual. A specialist of that sort could no doubt be garnered from the central office, yet a specialist of that sort would be in much demand and able to give little attention to each school. But, it is also possible, if a school takes the time to look around its own environment, it may discover that it has a person with the capabilities to perform the job of the specialist. That was the case in a number of our schools. We conveyed the idea to first check to see what was needed. Second, check to see if an individual at the school could satisfy the need. And third, if there were no internal resources to satisfy the need, then to reach outside of the school for appropriate solutions.

To make headway toward the goals of school renewal and building a capacity for organizational problem solving, we instructed all teams in systematic problem solving methods. We did that by partially drawing upon DTA data and sharing ideas about some methods other urban school districts had used to grapple with their more pressing problems. However, to personalize the problem solving and to tailor it for each team, our primary teaching of problem solving centered around the STP model (see Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends, 1977, p. 293). That model teaches a problem to be descrepancy or gap between the current situation (S) and some ideal target (T). Problem solving involves generating some action proposals (P) to close the gap.

Training as a mode of process consultation has strong potential. We found it an excellent follow-up to our data feedback. It was for the most part well received throughout the schools, but we do have cautions for outside consultants. We caution consultants against introducing training designs in urban schools for the sake of experimentation. Also prepackaged training designs are least effective; designs tailored to a school team are the most effective.

Larger problems of using training events in urban schools tie into lack of time. Large chunks of time are needed to introduce the skills to participants, to teach the skills, and to allow participants to practice the new skills. When training is conducted away from the school, time is needed to follow up the training with back home help. That became a worry of ours during the training of new assistant principals. Our assistant principals could not hope to achieve practical application of their training, without at home support. Because of limited budget and person-power, we were able to provide that support but to a few. The others were left to their own devises. And while some members of the training group did succeed in applying the newly acquired skills at their school, most found that their attempts of new and different way of operating in their school went against the established norms. The latter group became frustrated and disenchanted. Both we and the district, underestimated the amount of energy, time, and resources needed to support a change effort based on off-site training.

In retrospect, however, training was the most powerful of the four modes for gaining ground on our overarching purpose: helping schools to build a capacity for solving their own problems. We taught meeting skills to parents, teacher groups, central office committees and chairpersons of the school based curriculum teams. We discovered evidence of educators using our techniques for meetings throughout the district. Many educators when conducting meetings had our handouts in full view. In addition, teams and individual educators requested other training materials.

However, our criteria for success was not how many materials individuals asked for, but how they used the material or training to restore and renew vitality in their school. We knew that urban schools were not going to solve problems by merely introducing urban educators to new ideas. The changes occur when the educators test out the ideas. Though our training gained ground and won a few battles in regard to our overarching purpose, we eventually lost the war. We lost because we had minimal time and resources. We knew that educators enjoyed what we taught; recognized the value of the concepts; and were willing to try them out at their school. Yet without at the school nurturance and reassurance, training is a wasted effort.

Process Observation and Feedback

Process observation and feedback is closely related to data feedback. The mode involves observing some type of group or team activity. Information from the observation serves as data. The data may be fed back immediately or stored and given at another time.

An example may be pulled from our work with a high school guidance team. After we had instructed the team in some of our basic meeting skills, we observed their next meeting. During the course of that meeting, we occasionally stopped the process, made comments about how we saw what occured, and asked the participants to tell their feelings about the new process. In essence we facilitated the group as they adjusted to a new style. It was like helping a person to buy a new suit of clothes. Before making the purchase, individuals normally glance at themselves in a mirror to check the fit and make changes accordingly. We served as the mirror for the group, reflecting their desires and feelings as they tested a new organizational process.

Process observation and feedback was used in a similar manner with the middle school administrators. As they formed and built their new team, many meetings were held. We attended some of the meetings and operated in almost the same fashion as with the guidance department. During our start-up phase we also provided private coaching to individuals in their offices. We did that because some had tendencies to display unproductive behavior or introduce items that disturbed the flow of a meeting. In the privacy of their offices no one needed face an embarrassing moment or get defensive in front of other staff members. That also meant that our feedback stood a chance to be heard.

Our use of process observation and feedback, though limited, was fruitful. It is an excellent mode to follow a training event. We also discovered that process observation and feedback may be an effective way to assess the impact of a data feedback evaluation strategy.

Like data feedback, process observation and feedback requires high levels of trust between the consultants and the client group. The mode adds a burden to consultants: trusting their own skills enough to take risks. Their professional obligation includes candid feedback to the client group when they are not doing well.

As it is in training, time is essential for process observation and feedback. Many days may be spent watching the client group go through the business of implementing new norms and structures. Consultants may spend other days evaluating and categorizing their observations. And still other days may be spent coaching in meetings.

Confrontation

We used confrontation sparingly in our work. We also did not use it in the form of having several groups or teams confront each other about non-facilitative behavior (see Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends, 1977 for more detail). Confrontation in that manner is a pre-planned part of the intervention.

We used confrontation as a way to help move an intervention along. On three occasions we felt the need to adopt that strategy. The first involved the principal of an elementary school. The principal, who was very supportive of our TA during the intial stages of entry and negotiation, suddenly seemed to abandon her responsibility to our team. During important faculty meetings in which the school planning team presented progress reports she would disappear--almost as if to say the work was not important to her. Often at scheduled meetings she would burst into the room and introduce a new and private agenda that had little to do with the planned purposes of the meeting. Other hindering behaviors included asking for money and resources that were not parts of our original agreement, feigning ignorance at staff meetings about the work of the school planning team of which she was a part, and not giving a firm commitment to the work of the planning team. It was at a meeting of the planning team seven months into the intervention that we confronted the principal with these data. Her first reactions, as would be expected, were very defensive and argumentative, but as the meeting proceeded progress was made. The principal gave us feedback about reason for her behavior. Many of the incidents were attributed to miscommunication between our team and the principal. We accepted reponsibility for our unhelpful actions, and after much discussion, new agreements and understandings were reached.

The second use of confrontation again found us in conflict with a principal--the high school principal. One of the principal's top administrators acted as a liaison between the guidance department and the principal; though not a member of the team she was by job description its official leader. After many months of diagnosing, planning, training, and meetings, the team launched its new program. A week later during their regularly scheduled meeting, news came via the liaison that the principal thought the new guidance program was a dismal failure. The reaction of the group was one of shock and disappointment, because they, the same as we, were reasonably satisfied with the first week's progress. Some of the group felt that the news was to be no more than expected, because the principal in their view could not be counted on to support them. Others in the group, who during the early stages of training and planning had voiced the belief that the principal had some secret plan and would never allow the department he despised most to build its own program, reaffirmed their belief. At the moment the news arrived, the entire group was ready to give up their new effort and return to old habits. We insisted that rather than throw away four months of hard work, the group invite the principal into the meeting and hear his comments at firsthand. The group did send for the principal, and he was quite surprised to hear the message that he had supposedly sent. He agreed that a few things in the new program were not to his liking, but if the department were satisfied and wanted it that way, then he would stand behind them. At the same time, he insisted the program be evaluated to test its effectiveness. Additionally, he congratulated the department on the work they had achieved and changes they had made. He encouraged them to continue. Without that confrontation, work would have ceased; but as it was it turned out in later months our activities with the group increased.

The third use of confrontation found us in a coaching role. A part of our training strategy with the new assistant principals was to form a management team. The management team, a seven member cross-section of the new administrators, functioned as a liaison between our team and the other new administrators. The team gathered pertinent information and data from other administrators to guide our training. Another function that the team accidently fell into was carrying information about the needs of all the new school administrators to the central office. A big problem faced by the district in conducting its new curriculum program was the lack of resources and support provided the schools. Complaints were numerous. The new administrators griped that not only did the central office expect them to do previous jobs--filling out the various required federal forms, acting as disciplinarians, etc.--but to conduct a new and sometimes ambiguous program in their spare time. Finally, after the complaints were left in their care, the management team sought our help to determine a strategy. We suggested that they sort through the complaints, find the ones that were most numerous and salient, and present them at a meeting with key central office administrators. Later we heard that the meeting, while not satisfying all of the new administrators concerns, brought about some direct changes in district policy.

In the three instances in which we tried some form of confrontation, results were favorable. In each instance some hinderance that blocked our intervention was removed. In the instance with the high school principal, we gained his respect, trust and a reaffirmation of support for our work. With the elementary school we discovered confrontation to be a doubled edge sword. There it was favorable because we expressed our concerns and the principal backed away. We no longer had to contend with her destructive behavior patterns. Through confrontation our lives were not as miserable at the school. On the other hand, the confrontation caused us to make some new agreements with the principal. A part of those agreements were that we would have less involvement in the school. As a result of confrontation, our earlier goals to help the school renew some vital processes and build a capacity to solve its own problems had to be abandoned. Yet, because of the direction the principal tried to push the intervention, we would not have reached those goals at any rate. Confrontation in that instance helped us discover the inevitable conclusion a bit sooner.

The confrontation of central office administrators by the management team could be judged favorable in many ways. It helped the district's central office to realize a problem in their implementation strategy. It demonstrated that school administrators do have some influence upon a central office mandate. And it resolved a problem that had consumed many of our training sessions. As is usually the case, confrontation did not have neutral outcomes. Confrontation will usually help move the intervention forward or move it in a new direction.

Other Lessons Learned

So far we have discussed, briefly defined, and described our use of four modes of process consultation to facilitate school renewal. We also identified some problematic areas of the four modes for assisting an urban school district that attempted changes in the areas of instruction and curriculum improvements--improvements to renew processes. We can conclude that to a certain degree we were successful; that urban schools are capable of being taught to solve their own problems. The schools do have educators who are bright, capable and eager to test innovations that might bring new life and renewed energy to their school. But we also learned that those urban educators are few in numbers and need massive assistance in a monumental effort. Only through that assistance is it possible to build a sustained capacity for problem solving in any urban school. We were not successful in building that capacity because time and resources were scarce. And to a lesser degree, we were unsuccessful because we failed to convey to our clients the degree of responsibility and commitment we expected of them.

Building a sustained capacity for problem solving in an urban school requires huge chunks of time. It was naive of us and our governmental funding agency to think that in a year's time we could erase more than fifty years of debilitating history. A part of that naiveté was the notion that if we exposed some urban schools to successes other urban schools had achieved their problems then the former group of schools would be eager to adapt the strategies of the latter. We did not see that occur. Time was not available for it to occur. Today's urban schools for the most part are comparable to a fire burning out of control. Urban educators feel their main responsibility is to spend as much time as possible to put the fire out. But they have yet to acquire the necessary tools to extinquish the fire and are unwilling to spend time to get those tools, because that draws away from fighting the fire. It is a vicious circle that for process consultants who have some dissemination as a part of their work means difficulties to carry out the consultation; difficulties to teach new techniques; and difficulties to disseminate innovations to other schools.

Our work at individual schools was slowed by constant disruptions that ranged from frequent playground disturbances to sudden telephone demands from the central office. Often we could not spend five uninterrupted minutes with a principal or key staff. Another element that slowed the work was familiarity. As our trust with educators of the district grew they treated us more like family--a part of their system. As family though, our scheduled events took a back seat to fire fighting. On numerous occasions we were asked to reschedule or postpone events with little notice. Again time was a key factor. In the eyes of our clients, there was not enough time to participate in our events and keep the school running smoothly. For them, building a sustained capacity for problem solving and renewing the school's vitality were goals not important enough to be placed first on a list of priorities. The cooperation of our clients varied from day to day.

Final Words

Overall and despite handicaps, our work has indicated promising possibilities. We do not make that claim however, inferring process consultation to be a pancea for all the woes that plague urban schools. On the other hand we established that it is possible for consultants to use the four modes of process consultation to help build new norms and structures in urban schools. Informal evaluations of our work, i.e., post project interviews with principals, some teachers and central office administrators, indicated that our clients were satisfied with and highly complementary of the project. They generally agreed that some important and worthwhile changes were starting to take place in the district and in their schools. Many of those changes were brought about and influenced by the technical assistance we provided.

Our work in the west coast urban school district has come to an end. We are confident that some if not all of the activities that we initiated in schools will continue. The new norms, structures, and organizational procedures that we helped the guidance team introduce into their department were well solidified at the time of our departure. We have also received word that many of the parent-teacher committees that we helped set into motion continue to meet. And from time to time, a few of the educators of the district write to us requesting additional training material. So while we did not succeed in institutionalizing a problem solving capacity in any school we can feel proud about the foundation that we contributed. It is a foundation for self renewal that a few of the schools have already began to build on.

References

Schmuck, R., P. Runkel, J. Arends, and R. Arends. The Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools. Palo Alto,CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1977.

Developing A Renewal Team within an Urban School District*

Mike M. Milstein
State University of New York at Buffalo

During the last several years the Buffalo Public School District has been involved in the implementation of a court-ordered desegregation program. During "Phase One" of the program, the district's elementary school children were reassigned. "Phase Two" of the plan led to the desegregation of the district's secondary schools.

The problems the district encountered with unprepared and, often, fearful teachers, wary students, concerned community groups, and cumbersome transportation schemes during "Phase One" worried school officials as they began to chart a course of action for the implementation of "Phase Two." This experience, along with observations of the problems that plagued other urban districts responding to court-ordered desegregation such as Boston and Louisville, convinced the district's leaders that they would have to make a major effort to prepare the staff and community for "Phase Two."

They were aware that the staff would need significant training in interpersonal skills and, more important, need to explore underlying attitudes and values that might predispose them against the forthcoming secondary school desegration program. Given this conclusion, plans were fashioned to insure that all employees (secretaries, drivers, and custodians as well as teachers and administrators) would be briefed, receive work in needed skill areas, and explore their values orientations, to enhance the smooth implementation of the desegregation effort. Having run in-service programs for the district's secondary school principals and central office staff over the past several years, I was asked to help with this effort.

---

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1978 Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association.

Development of the School Improvement Resource Team (SIRT)

My advice was that the district would have to develop the capacity to overcome problems on a continuing basis and that this would require the identification and training of personnel from within the system who could serve this purpose. This belief is based upon observation of the work of Schmuck and Runkel when they trained the internal cadre in Eugene, Oregon[1] and my own years of experience in resource team development. The learnings from both of these experiences have been synthesized to develop the internal renewal team concept that has been implemented in the Buffalo Public Schools. That concept is also flavored by two unique aspects of the setting: the impetus for the development of the cadre was focused on a single issue area, racial desegregation and, unlike Eugene, Buffalo is eastern and urban.

The internal change cadre concept is an extension of externally-led OD efforts. OD is intended to help members of organizations develop skills and attitudes, through experiential learning, that will enable them to design structures and overcome shortcomings which restrain them from reaching desired states; i.e., OD helps organizations to become "self-renewing". Self-renewal, in other words, means that members of the organization will be able and willing to alleviate organizational problems as they occur.

With the development of an internal cadre, or resource team, learnings and abilities can be compounded because the organization possesses personnel who can carry on OD-related activities when future problems inevitably arise.

This assumption was eventually incorporated into an ESEA Title IV-C grant. The rationale for an internal resource team is spelled out in that proposal.

> A tremendous need for skill in resolving problems at the school/community level and the internal school level have been manifested. There is a need in this system for persons with skills in problem solving and interpersonal relations at school and community levels. These persons would have to function with both administrative and teaching staffs as well as the community. The school system needs to develop a cadre of internal resource persons to the schools, a team that will have a chance of becoming a viable asset because it will be comprised of local personnel from all professional levels. Also, concomitant to desegregation is integration, and if this is to succeed in our school system there is an additional need for strategies focusing on how to establish common goals, make decisions, design communication lines and evolve strategies for conflict resolution...

The intent was to bring together a group, to be known as the School Improvement Resource Team (SIRT), that would be large enough to sub-divide as needed to meet desegregation-related school level problems. The team was to be balanced in membership; i.e., central office, secondary and elementary schools; majority and minority races; administrators and teachers; males and females. Once selected the team would receive intensive training, advertise its availability to the district's schools and work at inviting sites on locally-identified problems. In the second year a "second generation" team would be developed to expand the district's ability to respond to emerging needs.

The activities that evolved over the first year can be divided into three relatively chronological phases: team selection and site identification; group development and maintenance; and a transition phase from training to school year activity. For the remainder of the paper I focus on the major events, issues and learnings that were associated with these three phases and then explore the concerns that still exist for the team and the consultant.

Team Selection and Site Identification

The Title IV-C grant award was not made known until the beginning of May, 1977. Because training was slated to begin in mid-June of that year, the application and selection processes for the team had to be fully desinged and implemented in a period of one month. At the same time principals who might be interested in receiving the team's services at their schools had to be notified and preliminary discussions had to be carried on. In short, SIRT was launched in an atmosphere of crisis, which is not an auspicious way to begin a project that emphasizes and attempts to model commitment, choice and long-range planning.

In addition, the district's top leaders made a decision to keep all central office personnel on duty throughout the summer to prepare for Phase Two of the desegregation program. In one stroke, access to individuals from this important group as potential members of SIRT was denied. This decision has isolated the central office from first-hand involvement and has affected its "readiness" to support SIRT's needs. Lack of involvement has meant, also, lack of sensitivity to the goals and processes employed. OD is not something that can be "explained"; it must be experienced.

Given time constraints and the lack of access to central office personnel, announcements were sent to every school, to be posted on a main office bulletin board, inviting administrators and teachers to apply for membership on the team. This proved to be one of our initial errors; in some schools the notice was either not posted or was removed by an interested staff member, so many personnel never had an opportunity to think about the possibility of joining SIRT.

The notice stressed the intense three week summer training that would be required, the commitment to group processes that would be expected, the probability of having to leave one's teaching or administrative chores several times a month over the year, and the relatively low reward that members would receive ($7.56 for each hour of training in the summer and substitute time during the year). In addition applicants were asked to develop statements explaining why they wanted to be a team member and were told that they would have to attend a Saturday session, without pay, during which they would be involved in simulations and case discussions to provide information for the selection team (composed of the central office administrator in charge of the grant, a representative of the teacher's union, and the writer, along with other district personnel on a "will-call" basis).

School personnel applied, therefore, with some cost in the form of effort and time. This was a purposeful part of the design, screening out those whose commitment might be marginal. I was later informed that it also probably separated out those who viewed the process as one more example of the district's efforts to "get something for nothing" from its employees. While this may be true I am convinced that the benefits of the "commitment" approach outweigh the costs. In fact, we used the same approach in selecting the "second generation", of SIRT.

Even with the time constraints, unavailability of central office staff, the poorly advertised notice and the high commitment called for by applicants, we received sixty-five applications (37 elementary and 28 secondary; nine of whom were administrators). This number was much higher than predicted by the few central office staff that helped to launch the project. Given the large number of applicants it was decided to run half day sessions, one for elementary personnel and one for secondary personnel. Two major events were planned for each session; a simulation (Towers)* and a brief school desegregation case[2] which each applicant was asked to respond to in writing and in a discussion. The sessions were video-taped for further analysis by the selection team. Interestingly some applicants were quite concerned about the video-taping, feeling that it inhibited their performance. This may be true but it may also be relevant to discover this early when one considers that individuals would eventually be observed closely in their later SIRT efforts.

---

*The Tower exercise requires participants to work in small groups to build a structure out of note cards that is self-supporting and is as tall as is feasible in the limited time permitted. The exercise focuses on competition, cooperation, leadership, problem solving, goal setting, group maintenance and conflict resolution. It is most useful for purposes such as team selection since group behavior patterns of members of Tower building teams are easily viewed by observers.

Observations of group meeting interactions, the written cases, the applicants' initial statements and information regarding past performance were all reviewed by the selection team. Criteria established for selection included the skills and attitudes of the applicants and a desire for balanced representation (i.e., administrators and teachers, minority and majority, elementary and secondary, and male and female). The result of the selection effort was a well-balanced group.

However, the group has experienced attrition and replacement of members. Of the initial sixteen on the team only nine remain and the total membership of the group now stands at only thirteen. Five left during the first week of training. Three were teachers--one's job was "excised;" a second felt that her resistence to a recent teachers' strike would make her ineffective as a team member; and another found unexpected added duties at home. Two were administrators—one was given a new post with added responsibilities while another felt that what SIRT was going to do should be left to principals. In January a teacher left to take a post in the new mayor's administration and in February the team asked a teacher to leave. I will explore the last situation later.

Once the team was selected, detailed planning commenced for summer training which was to include two weeks to focus on group development, diagnosis and process skills and one week to focus on macro and micro designing for schools requesting SIRT's services. In addition letters were sent to principals advising them of the availability of SIRT. Several principals wrote back asking for SIRT's service. The pieces were finally coming together.

About three weeks before training was to begin central office planners unilaterally made two decisions that would significantly affect SIRT. First, they decided to establish small groups of administrators and teachers in each of nine schools that they felt would be most affected by the desegregation effort. These groups, soon dubbed as "liaison teams," were to learn skills and techniques from SIRT and then conduct in-service activities for their schools' teachers. A week was added to the end of the summer's activities to allow SIRT to provide the required training. Second, they asked SIRT to run full day pre-school sessions with the faculties of three of the schools that the central office thought would probably feel the most pain as a result of racial desegregation.

These decisions created both difficulties and possibilities for SIRT. The possibilities lay in the opportunity to test the team's capacities before establishing long-term relations with specific schools, the probability of additional invitations from the schools involved, and the early identification of potential new SIRT members for the following year. The difficulties lay in the obvious overload situation for the summer; initial training of the team had not yet begun, plans still had to be made to work in school sites and now additional, and quite important, tasks would somehow have to be managed. The group's development had to be rushed to assure sufficient time to prepare for the many tasks ahead. This intensified pace sapped energies and probably contributed to the leaving of some of the original members. Time required for development of macro designs for long-term projects and for the establishment of SIRT routines for the school year were also encroached upon.

Group Development and Maintenance

During the first week of training SIRT members got to know each other, developed diagnostic instruments for subsequent work in schools and were briefed on desegregation problems that confronted the school system. By the end of the week five of sixteen members resigned, all, as noted, with apparently good rationales for leaving. However, the rapid and large scale loss left some doubt as to the continued existence of SIRT. I worried about replacing members after group development and training was already underway. SIRT members, for their part, seemed to become acutely conscious of their dwindling ranks and the added responsibilities implied for those who remained. Finally, one member took a risk by suggesting that an unspoken reason for the resignations might be fear of the unknown and concern about individual abilities to meet the challenges which lay ahead. Further, he said, he shared these concerns. Others joined in, noting that they were having similar feelings but thought that they were the only ones that had such self-doubts. The ensuing discussion was the most critical to that point;

it helped members to realize that they were not alone in their concerns and that support structures would have to be built within the team. The air was cleared and the team solidified; no new resignations were tendered until well into the school year.

Team losses brought members together for mutual support. Next, replacement tasks moved them to accept responsibility for SIRT's continuance. The central office was asked to use the alternate list developed by the selection group to find replacement as soon as possible. Progress seemed agonizingly slow so the team, on its own initiative, reviewed the list, agreed on priority replacements, made personal contacts and secured four new members within a few days.*

By the second week when the focus of training turned to process skill development, members began to recognize that they would have to translate the lessons they were learning into actions when they facilitated other groups. In fact, by mid-week the team developed an initial set of goal statements--for individual members, for the team, and for future client schools--that continues to be a source of support in its own growth and internal evaluation process.

---

*I held a special ten-hour session exclusively for these new members to introduce them to the skills that the others had already encountered and to help them develop a sense of belonging so they would be in a better position to deal with the original and quickly solidifying group.

By the middle of the second week, with the tide of resignations stemmed, support structures developed and goal focus established, the group relaxed into a sense of well-being and self-confidence. Initial crises were overcome and the reality of the fall when schools would reopen was apparently too remote to overcome the newly found self-assurance of most team members. This created some problems. For example, the team resisted my urging of outside reading and individual efforts beyond the confines of the working sessions. Perhaps this relaxation is inevitable and it may not be all that bad; individuals and groups cannot live in the shadow of conflict and crisis constantly.

When the group returned three weeks later for the final week of training which focused on macro and micro designing, a sense of urgency seemed to cut into this self-satisfaction. In a week the group would be responsible for training the liaison teams and in two weeks it would have to run sessions in three of the district's potentially most troublesome desegregation sites. Task focus began in earnest as we interviewed principals of these three schools and the other principals who had earlier requested SIRT's involvement over the coming school year and prepared for the arrival of the liaison teams. Task groups were formed and began to meet outside of the daily work schedule.

Concern was soon raised that the team was forgetting the need for group maintenance as the flood of tasks settled upon it. Issues related to unequal participation, commitment, and interpersonal relations began to emerge. The need for "air time" for group maintenance was recognized even if this meant delay in task accomplishment.

During the liaison teams' week SIRT members performed well as designers and group facilitators. The liaison teams left with new skills and specific plans for work in their own schools. Subsequent feedback to SIRT and to the central office, indicates that the work of that week and the efforts of the liaison teams in their own schools is viewed positively by the staffs of these schools. Next the team conducted full day sessions in the three secondary schools. All members participated as facilitators and/or observers at these events, gaining further skill development and building on the confidence established by the liaison teams' week.

Because of the extent of involvement by team members in liaison team training I found myself centrally involved in macro and micro designing for the three school-based activities. This was necessary to accomplish the immediate objective. However, it also set a pattern of team dependency, requiring that I continue in this role well into the school year. Not having sufficient opportunities to macro design during initial training, the team was slow in developing these skills. It took until the following spring for the team to move into this complex role.

The Transition Phase: From Summer Intensity to Fall Inactivity

The summer was characterized by conflict, high expectations and seemingly inadequate time to prepare for responsibilities. This high activity period was replaced in the fall by a period of inactivity. The efforts at the end of the summer had absorbed the intended planning time and left the team at a low energy level so long-range contracting and group maintenance concerns were left dangling. The team had to regroup. This task delayed full-scale activity for some time.

What followed was several fallow months during which members settled into their teaching and administrative jobs, monthly in-service sessions were designed and school sites were visited for explorations of possible projects. These vital activities were not nearly so exciting or fulfilling to team members as were those of the summer months. Members' newly developed skills laid dormant while routines of the school year continued. Some observers, within the group and from the central office, began to wonder if the original intentions for an internal resource group were ever going to be met.

The causes of this malaise seem to be three-fold. As noted, there was the problem of over-commitment in the summer. The added burdens of the summer put upon the team curtailed planning needed to insure a smooth and active transition into the school year. More important, assumptions on my part concerning the understanding of purposes and support of the team on the part of part of central office administrators and principals of school to which SIRT members belonged, were without foundation. These administrators had not participated in the events of the summer so there was little basis for them to judge the purposes, processes, or worth of SIRT. When desegregation-related situations developed in schools the central office relied upon traditional vehicles; i.e., upon principals of the beleagured schools. Similarly when SIRT members asked for released time they often ran into resistance from their principals who, understandably, were concerned that SIRT members' absences would create complications for them.

Finally, no routines for team maintenance had been established. For example, planning processes had to be developed for SIRT's monthly in-service meetings and mechanisms had to be established for selection of working teams at school sites. A particularly difficult maintenance problem soon arose; one member exhibited inadequate skill development, a reticence to participate, and a disapproving view of the group's concern about interpersonal relations.

Recognizing these problems the team spent several of its fall meetings designing strategies to improve its external relations and establishing policies and plans for internal group maintenance. Several strategies were developed regarding external relations. First, the associate superintendent, who is primarily responsible for educational affairs within the district, was given special and continuing consideration. This school official was a supporter of SIRT from the outset but had his own impressions of what the team was meant to accomplish and how it was to be accomplished. Briefly, he anticipated a team that would give expert advice to school staffs on issues such as discipline and classroom management and that this could be accomplished in one-to-one interactions (e.g., between a SIRT member and a principal). It has taken a number of discussions between the writer and the associate superintendent--sometimes attended by other central office personnel and SIRT members--to work through these misperceptions. Presently, we meet approximately one morning per month so he can be brought up-to-date on SIRT's purposes, processes and activities. In return he provides vital information about school sites and has, at times, secured resources such as additional substitute days for work with school personnel. As a result of these exchanges SIRT has become a more understood entity to this key official. This continuing socialization process will have to be expanded to other central office administrators.

Internally, the team had been developing routines for its governance. Planning procedures had evolved and group members had shared leadership roles. Especially difficult was the necessity of dealing with a member who was not viewed to be an asset to the team. An enormous amount of meeting time and psychic energy has been given over to devising processes for this problem which was first identified by a few members and then explored by a small group planning for an early fall team in-service. At a counseling session set up between the individual in question and two other team members all possible options, ranging from remediation to resignation, were set out. The member indicated a desire to continue so the team set up opportunities for her to facilitate group activities. Results proved disappointing and the group, by consensus, asked the member to withdraw. Her refusal led the team to ask the administrator officially charged with overseeing the group's activities to remove the member. He asked the group to give the member an additional thirty day trial and to develop an official policy for member review. The group agreed, set up evaluation criteria, gathered further information, re-evaluated the situation and derived the same conclusions at the end of that time period. The member was then removed.

The group had confronted a sensitive and highly emotional issue. The debate was conducted openly and with all present, including the member in question. The elaborate process of counseling showed unusual senstivity, particularly when it is recalled that this occurred during a difficult time in the group's life. Further, the problem was everyone's; if the member remained it would make it difficult to meet SIRT's obligation to send skilled teams to help at school sites, but it was also clear that if one member could be removed, all members could be removed. In a sense then, members were developing an evaluation process that they might also have to confront some day. This experience has, if anything, enhanced SIRT members' sense of ownership and control of the group's destiny.

As external and internal problems began to come under control, the team turned to the development of long-range plans and identification of continuing relations with specific school sites. Two sites that had issued invitations to the group at the start of the summer remained in SIRT's "job jar." One of these has become an ongoing project for the team. The other situation, however, quickly deteriorated and personnel shifts, initiated by the central office, replaced process help by SIRT.

Additional sites had to be identified if the resources available within SIRT were to be fully engaged. An impediment to further interventions was the fact that early in the fall the state education department ruled that the district could not dismiss children early for professional developed efforts. A major breakthrough came at this time. As a result of their training and facilitation efforts members of SIRT have become fairly astute observers of problems that existed in their own schools and were being sought out by their colleagues for advisement regarding school-based problem clarification and resolution. In effect, these team members became early sensing mechanisms for potential school site work. SIRT members come from across the district so this sensing mechanism is proving to be an important input for the team.

Two SIRT member's school sites have become ongoing clients for the team.* The first invitation came from a school devoted to the needs of the physically and mentally handicapped that is undergoing severe conflict related to federal legislation (PL 94-142). There were no extra funds to remunerate the school's staff for work outside of school hours but the school rose to the challenge; approximately 90% of the staff agreed to work for at least several sessions after school without compensation. The staff has since put in many hours to establish goals and set actions in motion. The central office's encouragement to the team to explore this intervention possibility even though it would not focus on racial desegregation was the first evidence that the district was beginning to see the broader possibilities for deploying SIRT

---

*By agreement, SIRT members who are at these sites participate as part of the school's staffs, not as site team members. The difficulty of facilitating when one is a "part of the problem" prohibits SIRT members from playing team roles at their own schools.

An invitation was extended to work in a second member's school; a newly formed magnet school (one of the district's responses to the court order) to help the faculty clarify goals and working relationships. In this instance, however, there are special funds reserved for staff development so the team has more flexibility in its working relationship with the school.

Another major intervention resulted from reports filtering back to the central office and to SIRT indicating that liaison teams felt that their experience with SIRT during the previous summer was quite valuable. They felt that they had been able to run effective in-service sessions in their own schools, but would require more training if they were going to be of continuing and expanding service to their schools. With support, in the form of substitute reserved days by the associate superintendent, SIRT initiated monthly, day-long, in-service sessions for these teams. These sessions have several foci: further process skill development; explorations of strategies to overcome difficulties, such as lack of time and pay for staffs to meet; and provision of opportunities for teams from different school sites to share ideas that seem to be working. The enthusiasm for these sessions remains high.*

---

*Interestingly three of the original liaison teams chose not to participate in these sessions. They reported that they have been unable to convince administrators in their schools to do anything with suggestions coming out of the fall in-service session. Their conclusion was that a continuation of the effort, under these conditions, would be a waste of time.

The process of selection of school site teams has shifted with time. Initially extensive criteria were established (e.g., minority and majority membership, administrators and teachers) and members bid by secret ballot for site involvement. Presently, site team selection is done openly and decisions are agreed upon by the entire team. The group has had sufficient interaction to recognize members' strengths and weaknesses and has achieved sufficient intra-group trust to confront this sensitive question openly.

Continuing Concerns

SIRT is a survivor! Born out of necessity, it grew from a concept into a reality in a time of stress, overcame the doldrums of an inactive fall, and is presently meeting the challenge of helping schools to alleviate problems. However, there remain significant obstacles to overcome. The more important ones are briefly explored below.

To begin, more internal effort must be given over to coordination of SIRT activities. Because of the stresses and strains that surrounded the team's first year development my coordinative role seemed appropriate but now it must be team-driven if the internal change cadre concept is to become integrated in the district. By mid-year the team established mechanisms for maintenance needs such as budgetary controls, and is now beginning to venture into the larger arena of coordination of school-based work. As the second year of the project begins SIRT has secured the half-time coordinative services of a central office administrator who has become a team member.

A related problem is the continuing press on the part of the group to have me play key roles in designing and implementing interventions. Given that SIRT members hold full-time positions which demand their attention and given the high-risk efforts that are undertaken, especially the first time around, this situation is somewhat understandable. Nevertheless, a shift away from the consultant and towards internal leadership in playing these roles seems vital if the team is to survive beyond the short term. Towards the end of the first year I began to absent myself from projects. Site teams responded positively, taking on over-all planning and implementation responsibilities of these efforts. In short, the group does seem to be moving to pick up the slack. The second summer's work, during which the team conducted some of the training of the second generation of SIRT provided further opportunities for design and implementation work. However, the question of consultant/group leadership roles may not be fully resolved for some time because there is a fine line between the guidance required for team development and the inhibition of growth and creativity. This is an issue for both the consultant and the team.

Associated with the leadership issue is the problem of balanced involvement and efforts by team members. As noted, one teacher had been ill and a secondary principal had been minimally involved because of his heavy responsibilities (it should be noted that the mere presence of his name on the SIRT roster has been beneficial as other secondary principals view him quite favorably and, as a result, appear positively disposed to the team). All of the other members are actively involved on school-site teams, but these projects vary in intensity. Inevitably, some group members' time and energy are taxed more than others. Thus far, site teams have found that other group members are willing to assist when there is need or there is a clear imbalance of contributions. This informal system may have to be formalized, especially as the group is doubled in size in the second year of the effort, to assure that some group members are not unduly burdened.

Another concern that is being expressed both by the team and by the central office is the inaccessibility of the more troubled schools to SIRT. Those that could benefit most from SIRT efforts are also the schools that are most reticent to let others in the door. The team has monitored several sites that would seem to benefit from its presence, but has been unable to gain access because the principals have made it clear that they would resist participation or block strategies for change that might result from any such participation. I suspect that this will be an ongoing issue to be faced by the team and the district.

Finally, a continuing concern is related to the need to make teachers and administrators more aware of the existence of SIRT and of the function it is intended to serve. This is not an easy task given the size of the district (more than 52,000 students and almost 3500 professional/staff members) and the many new projects that have been initiated as a result of the district's desegregation program. Present efforts have been limited to continuing the dialogue with the associate superintendent, developing a brochure for dissemination to the district's teaching and administrative staff, participating in the teacher union's conference day, getting descriptive articles in the local newspaper and the administrators' newsletter and having interviews on local radio programs. These efforts appear to be effective, but more planned exposure will be required before SIRT will become an integral part of the system. Since SIRT is presently supported by federal funds, this is not an academic issue; the district must soon accept responsibility for continuing the project. Need to do so can only be felt once there is recognition of SIRT's existence and its potential for positive contributions to the district.

In Closing

Overall this attempt to implement an internal change cadre in an urban school district seems to be working. The team has solidified, schools are finding its services relevant, and the district's leadership has become more supportive and understanding. The second year will raise the number of SIRT members to twenty-four. There are plans underway to ensure maximum involvement of this expanded group by diversifying site work to include provision of services to a variety of sub-groups within schools (e.g., teaching teams, administrative cabinets, grade-level teacher groups, and student groups) as well as continuation of work with total school staffs. In addition the district is trying to recapture in-service time for school staffs through ESAA grants and special dispensations by the state so that SIRT's capacities can be more fully tapped.

My own role as consultant should become more problematic. The team will take on many of the functions I have had to maintain, but there will be need for continuing guidance and advisement as it incorporates new members and diversifies its services. In other words, as the team becomes clearer about its functions and activities, my role will become less directive and specified, and more supportive.

Can comparisons be made with the work of Schmuck and Runkel in Eugene? The settings are significantly different; the impetus for team formation in the present instance is more issue-specific and high-risk oriented; 1978 is different than 1971; and the personalities and biases of the consultants are certainly not uniformly the same. Still, a reading of the chapter on "Institutionalizing Organization Development in School Districts" in the Second Handbook impresses me that issues that occur in one place that has developed an internal resource team will probably occur in other places, even given local idiosyncrasies. Schmuck and Runkel's discussion of issues related to readiness, training, transition and team maintenance also proved to be issues at Buffalo. These issues, as explored in the paper, tend to verify the conclusions of Schmuck and Runkel's earlier work. Hopefully, with further efforts such as those implemented in these school districts we will be able to devise clearer strategies to overcome problems associated with the development of internal renewal teams.

Footnotes

1. See Richard A. Schmuck, Philip T. Runkel, Jane H. Arends and Richard I. Arends, The Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools, Mayfield Publishing Company, Palo Alto, California, 1977. Chapter 12, "Institutionalizing Organization Development in Schools", (pp. 524-545) provides a description of that project.

2. "Can Total School Integration Be Achieved?" from Richard A. Gorton, Conflict: Controversy and Crisis in School Administration and Supervision, Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 1972, pp. 208-211.

A Three-Faceted Design for Renewing Urban Elementary Schools

by

Daniel Scheinfeld[1]

Institute for Juvenile Research
Chicago, Illinois

The quality of education in large urban school systems is cause for great public concern. Teachers and students are often alienated from each other and from the school. Students are emerging from the educational process ill-prepared to adapt successfully to life conditions, being cheated of an opportunity to enrich themselves in an educational setting. At the same time, this society's technology for bringing about educational improvement is, by and large, not proving to be effective. The Rand study, for example, reports that only 5-15 percent of the government funded projects under its examination showed any sustained effects. (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977).

Introduction to This Project

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the quality of classroom life is multiply determined; a variety of factors act in combination to influence the educational process. Hence, it seems advisable to explore educational improvement strategies which take into account as many of those factors as possible. The project described below offers an approach to elementary school improvement which features interventions into three key aspects of school life: the classroom, the organizational climate of the school, and school-community relations. This project design uses the roles of classroom advisor, organization development consultant, and school-community organizer working together as a coordinated team for school improvement.

---

[1] Though I am responsible for this paper as it is being presented, I wish to acknowledge that significant portions draw upon a manuscript entitled "From the Roots Up" which I co-authored with the following colleagues: Ronald Cichon, Clive Hazell, Omar Lopez, Donna Morris, Susan Schaffer and Sue Sommers.

The premise behind this project is that a combination of all three of these inputs is necessary to increase significantly the quality of teaching and learning in large urban school systems. Independent work on any of these factors without attention to the other two will, in most cases, be less than what is needed to bring about sustained educational instructional improvement. This argument follows from several more specific propositions.

First, significant changes in teaching will require one-to-one help in the classroom for each teacher. This is the case because classroom change needs to be comprehensive if it is to endure; i.e., changes must take place in curriculum, physical space arrangements, classroom organization, interpersonal relations, and often in a teacher's understanding of how children learn. A one-to-one approach is required for change also because significant growth in a teacher (or anyone else) is most likely to occur when it is deeply rooted in that person's unique situation and set of motives, talents and concerns. One-to-one classroom assistance in most cases will need initially to come from a teacher advisor but in some cases may come from a principal or fellow teacher. Assistance of the teacher in the classroom, however, is not sufficient to ensure lasting change of an educational program.

Second, the professional development of teachers requires a supportive organizational climate (see, for example, Berman and McLaughlin, 1975; Lieberman, 1973; Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends, 1977; Zaltman, Florio and Sikorski, 1977). Since the organizational climate of most schools is not conducive to classroom innovation and teacher risk taking, assistance at the organizational level is necessary if classroom developments are to be encouraged and sustained among a significant number of teachers. Organizational development (OD) efforts, however, while necessary are not sufficient for comprehensive classroom change. A small number of studies have reported some change at the classroom level resulting from improved organizational climate of the school (see, Bigelow, 1971; Keys and Kresisman, 1978; and Schmuck et al., 1977), but there is not enough convincing evidence yet in the literature that comprehensive classroom change tends to occur as a result of OD interventions.

Third, the long-run success of innovations in an educational program, particularly in an elementary school, requires sustained parent involvement and support. The existence of parent support, based upon a clear understanding of and sense of shared ownership in classroom developments, can be a great motivating force for both teachers and principals. That support may also significantly increase the active support of the district superintendent. The absence of parental support, on the other hand, leaves the school vulnerable to community attack and to the ultimate negation of progress.[2] Given that school-community relations in the majority of city schools are characterized by a low level of community understanding or involvement, most schools will require assistance in the development of mutually supportive school-community relations if the necessary level of parental involvement and support is going to be reached. However, as with the other two factors, parental involvement and support is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for insuring viable improvements in the classroom.

In summary, each kind of assistance (in classroom, organizational climate and school-community relations) constitutes a necessary but not a sufficient condition for enduring educational improvement in the vast majority of schools. For success all three facets must be taken into account, although the specific amount and character of inputs required may differ significantly from school to school.

Macro-Design of the Project

The three-faceted design for instructional improvement evolved during a three-year action-research project in which a team of seven change agents worked with two public elementary schools in Chicago. From the inception of the program the team implemented the three-faceted design summarized above, although at the beginning, the OD component was only rudimentary.

---

[2] The importance of parent involvement in school change efforts is nicely summed up by Gary Bridge: "Parents can make or break school innovations, and unfortunately they most often are cast in the role of spoilers, since it is easier to organize parents for resistance than for assistance. But successful innovations, especially individual level interventions, require parent involvement, and schools can amplify their impact by mobilizing the resources of home and paying close attention to the nature and quality of home-school linkages." (Bridge, 1976)

Purposes and Strategies

The mission of this project from its inception was to foster teacher and classroom improvement that made learning more "meaningful" for children. We wanted to see classrooms develop in which children were enthusiastic; personally involved in their learning; expressive of their interests, thoughts and perceptions; and showed initiative and self-direction in their work.

We assumed that teachers would be likely to lead children in this direction if we worked with them in areas that they themselves found personally meaningful, i.e., pursuing developmental goals for children that they as teachers felt were important, and the teachers bringing their own personal interests and enthusiasms into the classroom.

This strategy of building on the personal meanings of teachers rested on two assumptions derived from our previous research:[3] (a) that, in general, teachers would become motivated to develop new teaching capacities when they found the direction of development to be personally meaningful and the associated activities personally rewarding and (b) that, more specifically, a teacher who experienced the classroom as a place where he or she might express personal meaning would be likely to be interested in making learning personally meaningful for students.

---

[3] U.S. Office of Education grant project, 1970-73, in which we collaborated with a small number of teachers in two schools to help them develop "open classrooms" and research the processes involved. (Nicholas, Palma, Cichon, Hazell, Mohrman, and Scheinfeld, 1977).

We wanted to reach as many teachers as possible within a school, partly because we believed that innovating teachers needed the support of innovating peers, and partly because we wanted to make our model of intervention reasonably cost effective.

Our specific intended approach when intervening in the classrooms was to help teachers diversify learning opportunities for children through two major avenues: experiential learning (learning through direct contact with material and living things), and the arts (painting, drawing, clay, murals, music, and drama).

Ultimate Approach

During the three-year period, the thinking of our team members underwent some significant transformations about how to apply each of these factors, how to coordinate the three, and how to establish contracts with schools, school districts and communities.

The ultimate approach of the team, largely developed during the team's engagement with the second school, used an OD framework for the overall coordination of team efforts. Specifically, a planning facilitator first helped a school reflect on its problems, needs and desires. The planning facilitator was assisted by the team's community organizer, who helped members of existing parent's groups to formulate their own concerns and wishes. Together they worked with the principal to bring the school and community into a dialogue directed towards the formulation of tentative goals for the school. Once the goals were identified, the planning facilitator continued to assist the school in this reflective planning process and also provided consultation to improve communication and collaboration within the school. In addition, the facilitator coordinated the activities of other team members as they were needed to help the school fulfill its goals. It was expected that periodic evaluations and reflections, following periods of active experimentation, would result in significant shifts in the school's goals and concerns.

Interventions

The observations reported here took place in two public elementary schools. The Appleton School was the team's primary focus during the three years of the project.[4] At Crosby, the second school, the team had a much shorter and less intensive engagement. We were able, however, to confirm a number of the ideas for successful intervention through our mistakes and successes in the Appleton settting.

The school population of Appleton had 650 students and was approximately 25 percent Latino, 10 percent Asian, 60 percent white, and five percent other. An active core of white middle-class parents provided a strong impetus for the school's development from the beginning of the project.

The Crosby School enrolled 470 students, 80 percent black and 20 percent white. The socio-economic position of the black community was mainly of lower-middle income, with some middle income, while the white population was evenly divided between the two. About half of the 21 teachers were black and half were white. Much of the impetus for the school's invitation to our team came out of the concern by both black and white parents to improve the quality of the school, and thereby contribute to the economic and racial stabilization of a changing neighborhood.

---

[4] Pseudonyms are used for both schools.

Case #1--Appleton

In March 1973, the three original members of our Renewal team were invited to Appleton School to give an in-service workshop for the teachers and principal. The invitation was arranged by a community member who had an interest in the improvement of the school. This workshop led to a series of discussions with teachers, principal, parents, and local community organizations. We saw that there was considerable interest in and support for a project in the school. The area superintendent agreed informally to provide a full-time position which would allow an experienced classroom teacher to join the team.[5]

The manner in which the project plan was negotiated was, as we soon learned, a major error. Basically, we were presenting our ideas to teachers, principal, and community, and asking them if they wanted to implement our ideas with us. We received a fairly favorable response and so were encouraged. We then wrote a proposal to the Ford Foundation with modest input from teachers. A grant from the Ford Foundation was awarded in spring, 1974.[6] The design called for four teacher-advisors, one school-community organizer, one organization development consultant, and a documentor. Virtually every teacher in the school had signed the proposal, but the ownership of the project was much more ours than theirs.

---

[5] At that time the Chicago school system was divided into three geographical "Areas". Each area had its own Area Superintendant and contained between 10 and 12 "Districts", each with its own district superintendant. Later the area system was dissolved, leaving only the districts as the main unit below the central office. Typically a district contains 15-20 elementary schools and one or more high schools.

Following the initial negotiations, the team's work at Appleton took place broadly in two phases:

Phase I. The first phase lasted from June 1974 to spring 1976. This can be characterized as our primary learning period. The four teacher advisors were basically learning how to form effective partnerships with teachers. The consultation organization development organized a Teacher Planning Committee and gave a series of communication workshops. He also helped various individuals and groups in the school articulate and resolve their conflicts. This effort was aimed at alleviating some of the problems of low morale, poor communication, and low trust in the school. The school-community organizer effectively launched a Parent Support Group which was to become a vital element in the development of the school.

By mid-winter of 1976 the four teacher-advisors were feeling a great malaise. They had been engaged with almost every teacher in the school in one sort of classroom project or another, but felt that they were not really establishing a significant working relationship with most of them. There was not a clear sense of partnership between advisors and teachers. By and large, they did not seem to be dealing with the teachers' core concerns.

---

[6] This work, from its inception, has been financed generously by the Ford Foundation through the Institute for Juvenile Research and through Hull House, both in Chicago.

Phase II. In spring the teacher-advisors decided to attempt a major transformation in their relationships with the teachers. The advisors wrote a letter to the Teacher Planning Committee saying that they felt that the project was ill-conceived, that the ownership lay too much with the team, and that they were not dealing sufficiently with teachers' primary needs and concerns.

Tensions which had been building up for over a year began to dissolve. The advisors had discussions with teachers to get closer to their priorities and values. They decided to focus primarily on a dozen teachers rather than work with everybody at once as they had been doing. They began to devote a considerable amount of energy to the development of physical space arrangements in the classrooms. There was strong teacher receptivity in that direction and it was felt that the development of space would open up many other possibilities for classroom development. The advisors became much more giving of time, energy, and materials to teachers than they had been previously.[7]

The results, which delighted the team and a great many teachers, seemed almost magical. A number of teachers who had been resistant began to work seriously with the advisors, many of who had not been resistant doubled their efforts. By the end of the team's engagement with the school, 12 out of 30 teachers (8 in the regular school and 4 in the Special Education Department) had developed to the point where it seemed likely that they would keep on developing in the team's absence. The majority of these teachers were evolving their classrooms in multi-faceted ways (space, curriculum, organization, individual self expression for both children and teachers, and learning partnerships between teachers and children). Another six teachers benefited from considerable team input, but it was not clear how much growth would continue. These results represent a significant recovery from the dismal picture we were experiencing in the middle of the second year.

---

[7] The emphasis upon physical space and the decision to be more giving to teachers was stimulated heavily by a visit from Walter Drew and Henry Olds, both formerly of "other Ways," a Boston school facilitation organization. In this and other respects, their visit in March 1975 had a profound effect on our thinking.

Case #2--Crosby

Teh Crosby School is in a different district from Appleton, located some 15 miles away.[8] Our involvement with Crosby began in the summer of 1976 when the principal and district superintendent asked us to work in the school. The Crosby situation gave us an opportunity to incorporate our learning from Appleton into a new plan. Our relationship with Crosby contained at least eight features which were absent from the Appleton arrangement: 1) needs assessment by school and community prior to any engagement with the teacher-advisors; 2) proposal to the team and to the district superintendent written by teachers, principal, and parents containing specific goals based on the needs assessment; 3) further brief needs assessment in cooperation with the team; 4) a short, renewable contract between the team, the school, and the district; 5) collaboration with district resource people; 6) a principal who became an active partner with the team, the district resource people, the teachers, and the parents in the development of the school; 7) active support from the district superintendent, including materials, released time for teachers, visits to the school, and participation in evaluation meetings; and 8) a workshop structure, based upon teachers' interests and supplemented by follow-up with teachers in their classrooms, which provided an opportunity to quickly establish working relationships between teachers and advisors.

---

[8] These two districts are sub-units within the Chicago Board of Education. (See Footnote #5) The district in which Appleton is found includes 18 elementary schools and three high schools. Crosby's district has 18 elementary schools and two high schools.

Following four months of negotiation, our actual working engagement with the Crosby School took place in the last 16 weeks of the project and involved one day per week of our time. Our estimation is that the Crosby teachers made as much progress in their classrooms in four months, one day per week, as the Appleton teachers made in the first year-and-a-half, four days per week. By the end of the four-month period we had established working relationships with virtually all of the 21 Crosby teachers including a core of teachers who became ready to work on major developments in their classrooms. We had in effect completed the first major stage of a school development project.

The significant difference between the Crosby and Appleton rates of progress was no doubt attributable in part to increased skills among the teacher-advisors. But in much greater degree it seems to have resulted from the differences in approach.

First, we found, with extraordinary predictability, that whenever teachers' deeply felt concerns and enthusiasms became a major ingredient in our working relations with them, then significant classroom development took place. Whenever we became top-heavy in imposing our own direction on change or in deluging teachers with our ideas, they became alienated, apathetic,hostile, withdrawn, or superficially involved.

Second, the main ingredients for teacher growth centered on actual classrom experience with new concepts, materials, methods, and modes of relating to children. Teachers were most likely to integrate and extend the new approaches when they directly experienced that the children were involved, enthusiastic, and growing in valued ways, and when the teachers themselves derived pleasure and a sense of growth through the new materials and activities. Some of the most successful classroom activities in this regard were murals, clay, drawing, math manipulatives, and living things curricula (such as fish, plants, humans, and mealworms). For example, one advisor introduced a teacher and her class to a sequenced series of explorations into the outside and inside of an egg. As the activity went into the second and third day, the teacher became very pleased and somewhat surprised at the quality of the children's engagement with the eggs. "I loved the intense observation, the way they really looked, the thoughtfulness." She felt she had learned a great deal herself in exploring her own egg and shared her experience with the class. She said to them "I drew an egg yesterday. At first it had no resemblance to an egg. But as I practiced and practiced'it got to look like an egg. I learned that you really have to try. It's under the skin learning....it's really deep learning. Once you learn something this way you never forget it." As the egg exploration activity extended into measurement and graphing the teacher was astounded to find that many of the children had difficulty in carrying out mathematical operations that they seemed to have mastered in their math workbooks. She began to see the importance of an experiential approach to math. She told them "It doesn't do any good to teach you arithmetic if in real life you can't do things like this...because arithmetic is to help you solve real problems in life."

Third, for effective application of the new learnings, it was important that teachers develop capacities and understandings in four interdependent aspects of classroom functioning: curriculum, physical space, classroom organization, and interpersonal relations. The teachers, as they developed, needed to become adept at generating improvements in each of these four interrelated aspects and to understand connections between them. Classroom development in one of these four lead to and often required changes in the other. Attempting to develop teachers' capacities in one aspect without attending to the others weakened the chances of an innovative pattern taking hold.

Through this range of new classroom experiences teachers gradually developed a new sense of confidence, based on the realization that significant classroom change, through their own efforts, was possible and rewarding.

Fourth, the personal relationship between advisor and teacher was an essential ingredient in this growth process. (See also Fullan and Pomfret, 1977) In particular, we found that the most effective method for teacher growth was one in which the teacher-advisor worked side by side with the teacher in the classroom, engaging with the children and sharing in the time-consuming work of generating new materials, new spatial arrangements, etc. Through this partnership the processes of classroom-based teacher development (discussed above) were most likely to take place. Workshops provided an excellent entree for working with teachers and for helping teachers to begin collaborative relationships with one another, but were no substitute for an intensive, classroom-based, one-to-one relationship between teacher and advisor. None of the teachers who made significant strides did so primarily through a workshop experience alone. In general, we found that a combination of workshop and one-to-one work with teachers and children in classroom proved to be the optimal strategy.

Few teachers wanted to alter their classrooms in leaps and bounds. Normally, the development of a classroom started with a relatively small change in one of the four areas mentioned above and gradually moved out to wider circles of change, increasingly involving all of the areas.

Fifth, the relationship between the teacher and advisor tended to pass through four stages. In the first stage the teacher and advisor explored the possibility of making meaningful connections with each other. Typically the advisor introduced some concretely useful item to the classroom: a room divider, a math game, a book, an aquarium. In most cases this happened in response to a teacher's request. In some cases the advisor simply turned up with something which he or she thought would interest the teacher. One advisor termed these early offerings "ice breakers". The materials that were found most successful in establishing a developmental alliance between teacher and advisor were characterized by three attributes. They a) were concrete and immediately useful to a teacher; b) pushed the teacher to consider possibilities that he or she had put aside or not considered; and c) offered the teacher a low risk opportunity to experiment. In the second stage teacher and advisor worked together on some larger classroom project; e.g. a drama unit, learning center, or social studies curriculum on the city. These projects often grew out of the transactions which took place at the first stage; for example, in several cases the introduction of a book case led to the establishment of a reading corner and a richer reading curriculum. Next, the partnership tended to move to many facets of classroom development; for example, learning centers in virtually every area of curriculum, a highly differented system of work and storage spaces, and a classroom organization which fostered independent learning. Finally, the advisor took steps to prepare the teacher for his/her departure and to help ensure the continuity of the teacher's development. In each of the stages trust increased, the partnership deepened, teachers took more initiative, and the changes became broader. Relationships progressed at very different rates, depending upon the receptiveness of the teacher and the availability of the advisor. Many teacher/advisor partnerships did not get beyond second stage. Some ended at the first stage.

Sixth, work on physical space in the classroom (either through building new furniture or through re-arranging the existing furniture) was frequently an excellent portal through which to enter the teacher-advisor relationship. Space tended to be an area in which teachers did not feel they were supposed to have expertise; hence, they were not particularly threatened by collaboration with a stranger on space issues. Also most teachers had some idea about a piece of furniture they would like to add to their classroom.

Seventh, we found that advisors can be very effective in combining with parents and/or teachers and children in improving the overall aesthetic climate of the school, which in turn can support improvements in the classroom. Two strategies were particularly effective. The first was the establishment of an art gallery in the front hall which became sustained by frequent classroom contributions. The second was a program of painting murals in the hallways which was begun initially by advisors and parents, then picked up by teachers and children in the Special Education Department and in particular classrooms. In our estimation, these developments significantly stimulated artistic expression in most of the classrooms.

School-Community Relations

Our belief in the importance of local parent support for educational improvement has been further confirmed through this project. We have seen, for example, how a relatively small amount of parent negativism can put significant crimps in a teacher's desire and courage to innovate. We have also seen how parent input can significantly boost teacher morale and provide significant material assistance to a growing school program.

In working with school-community relations, the community organizer found it useful to think of parents as being roughly of three "types": Active, Marginal, and Uninvolved. The Active parents were predominantly middle class and of higher economic, educational and social status than the Marginal parents. The Uninvolved parents were mixed.

Active parents. Many of the Active parents had gained organizational skills through previous experience in groups. Virtually all of the Active parents perceived a strong causal connection between the quality of their childs elementary schooling and his chances later in life. In our experience, an effective approach to developing the support of the Active parents, and to promoting good communication between these parents and the school, was one which engaged these parents in a direct service relationship to the classroom program. Through the active assistance of parents in the daily program parents developed personal relationships with teachers, and a first-hand knowledge of the educational process with all of its complexities. They also tended to achieve a new legitimacy in the teacher's eyes and thus to have a right to enter into discussions about the direction of the school. This kind of parental involvement also brought with it daily encouragement for teachers and very substantial physical support.

It is not necessary, in our view, that the majority of parents become actively involved. We found at Appleton, for example, that 20 to 30 parents involved actively can provide a core of political, moral and physical support needed to underpin school improvement programs in a school of 650 students.

Our Appleton experience has shown, moreover, that when parents are actually organized into a well-structured service group within the school, they can play a very important role in the school's evolution. Since the function of the parent support organization was to be significantly different from the traditional roles of the PTA and local parents' council, it was decided that this classroom service group would be created initially as a separate structure from the other parent groups, even though there was considerable overlap in membership. This organization had as its sole function direct assistance to teachers and children; it was not engaged in evaluating teachers. The activities of the service organization included: 1) recruiting parents; 2) training; 3) contacting teachers to determine teacher needs; 4) scheduling parent helpers to work with teachers; and 5) providing ongoing support for parent participants. All of these functions needed to be met. The existence of a formal group structure also contributed to continuity of the parent support system. Without such a structure programs of this nature tend to rise and fall with the activities of a charismatic leader; therefore, some formal organization is required.

We have found that parents were likely to be most effective in establishing working relations with the average teacher when they began with high need and low threat activities such as clerical assistance and out-of-class tutoring. As relationships of trust developed, teachers tended to become increasingly more open to using a wide range of parental talents in the classroom proper. Parents ultimately became involved in assisting individual students in the classroom, working with small groups, and making special presentations to the class.

Our general conclusion is that, within a large urban school system, parent participation in educational planning without supportive parent participation in the day-to-day activities in the classroom is likely to lead to little long-range parental involvement and support. Without direct service contact in the classroom, parents tend to remain uninformed and either drift away or slip into an adversary position. Teachers tend to wary of and to become unreceptive to parental suggestions.

At Appleton, the service group that evolved was called the "Parent Support Group." Early in the project, the school-community organizer began working with a very small group of mothers who wished to enter into a helping relationship with the school and to overcome a state of school-community alienation that had developed during a period of intense conflict two years earlier. He helped these mothers to do a survey of teachers' interest in parental help, and he assisted them in organizing a series of summer planning sessions which included parents, teachers and the principal. Out of this the Parent Support Group emerged. Throughout its development the organizer provided consultation to the leaders of the group. With the help of the teacher-advisors, two additional spin-off groups developed from the impetus created by the Parent Support Group. An Arts Committee was formed to help teachers bring artistic activity into the curriculum, and a committee was formed to manage a collection of 60 learning kits developed by the team.

As we departed from Appleton it was clear to us that the parent program was providing major support to teacher development and to the overall vitality of the school. Parents reported that they had developed the courage and initiative to carry out school support projects that they would not have dared to tackle three years previously.

Marginal parents. The Marginal parents at Appleton, mainly low-income Latino mothers, were not easily brought into a classroom service program. These parents could frequently be seen outside the school at major transition times such as 9:00 or noon, but were seldom seen in the school. They pressed the principal at times to improve safety standards or other non-academic conditions in the school, but by and large they felt alienated from the educational process. They also had very few organizational skills.

The school-community organizer, himself a Latino, found that the most effective strategy for involving these parents was to begin with home meetings and then to help them set up self-improvement activities in the school such as nutrition workshops, crafts groups, or English language classes. In the context of these activities, parents came into contact with school-based learning experiences. This began the process of identification with the school as a learning environment. In these contexts it was also possible to engage parents in discussions which raised their consciousness about the relation of a child's current learning activity to his or her future prospects. Finally, since parents were responsible in part for organizing these self-improvement sessions, they began to gain the kinds of organizational skills already possessed by many of the active parents. The school-community organizer found that many parents, having once participated in the school-based learning sessions, were ready to participate in the bilingual council, a vehicle through which they could effectively press their increasingly conscious concerns about their children's education. None of these marginal parents became part of Parents Support Group during the course of the project, but in a long range strategy, participation in this group or a parallel Latino group would be anticipated.

At the Crosby School, our contact was mostly with the Active parents. A group of these parents had been involved with teachers in a needs assessment prior to the team's contact with Crosby and had applied pressure to the district office to give special attention to the improvement of the school. One of their primary motives was to maintain the middle-class flavor of the neighborhood. The school-community organizer met with these parents once or twice a week to help develop a parent service group, but progress was considerably slower than at Appleton. Nevertheless, by the time the team completed its engagement with the school, some five parents were involved in making or gathering materials for classrooms and another group were being trained as tutors.

Our Crosby experience leads us to hypothesize that there are two kinds of Active parents. One is politically oriented towards applying pressure to school and district to improve the school. The other is more oriented towards a service relationship. While many persons are likely to be some mixture of these two types, we have found that those who take a predominantly "political" posture do not easily enter into a service function. Hence, in organizing a parent support group, it is important to take note of which of these themes predominates in the potential participants. At Appleton, the primarily politically oriented parents were in the forefront prior to the team's entry to the school. After our entry, the more service oriented active types emerged.

Organization Development

Our findings strongly support the proposition that the organizational climate of a school is a key variable in the success of teacher development efforts.

There are three salient dimensions of the organizational climate that impinge on teacher and classroom development. The first is the general quality of working relationships among the teachers. Are these relations characterized by collaboration, trust, mutual helpfulness, or are they characterized by isolation, tension, mistrust, factionalism, and competitiveness? If the latter is the case, one can expect progress toward instructional improvement in a school to be slow indeed.

The second crucial dimension of the organizational climate is the pattern of norms and behaviors regarding participation of teachers in decision making. If the decision making patterns of the school largely exclude teachers, then they are not likely to be very inclined to work cooperatively or to develop their own programs (Lieberman, 1973; Zaltman et al., 1977).

The third dimension is the relationship between principal and teachers, no doubt the key relationship in the overall organizational climate of the school. If the principal is supportive of the needs and classroom aspirations of each teacher as his first priority, then collaborative attitudes are likely to be high, teacher morale will be high, and teacher readiness to enter into decision-making process will probably be high. If, on the other hand, the teacher is treated as a pawn in the principal's management game, if his or her individual needs and aspirations are ignored and/or violated, then teachers tend to remain isolated, distrustful of each other, discouraged, powerless, and for the most part, not oriented towards the renewal of the school (Williams et al., 1974).

Lessons at Appleton

At Appleton we rapidly discovered that the organizational climate of the school was seriously detrimental to teacher growth. For example, in the first summer of our work there, the principal contracted for a federally funded bilingual program which called for massive structural alterations in teachers' classrooms without either consulting or preparing teachers. His general style was laissez-faire; usually he did not interfere with teachers' basic instructional programs. But, at the same time, he was non-supportive in that typically he failed to show genuine interest in or appreciation for teacher's innovative efforts. When he did communicate with a teacher regarding the classroom program, it usually was in the form of implementing some prescription handed down by the district or implementing a federally contracted program such as the one described above.

The most successful organizational improvement in the Appleton school was the Teacher Planning Committee. This committee, composed of elected teacher representatives, participated in a wide range of decisions affecting the life of the school. It still convenes regularly and many teachers report that the existence of the committee has been a major contributor to the significantly improved morale of Appleton teachers. The committee has also provided a major vehicle for collaboration between parents and teachers. Together, for example, they assumed joint management of the Teachers and Parents Planning Room.

The development of the Teacher Planning Committee began at the inception of the project. It arose out of a need for the team to have efficient communications with the staff, and out of a strong feeling among both teachers and principal that better communication was needed in the school. The organizational development consultant on the team played a major role in the creation of this group. At first he took a leadership stance and then steadily moved into the position of consultant for the remainder of the team's engagement with the school. While the committee performed a number of valuable functions in improving the organizational health of the school, it did not basically alter the principal's overall style of management.

The Crosby Approach

In contracting with a second school, the administrative style of the principal was one of the foremost issues in our mind. We found a principal who genuinely endorsed the philosophical direction decided upon by the teachers and community, and who was highly supportive of the teachers' efforts toward classroom development. She took an active role in organizing the interface between the teachers and the facilitators, and generally became a partner with team and teachers.

In our estimation, the administrative style of the Crosby principal, or some variant of that style, is virtually a necessary condition for the long-range success of a school improvement effort. The question is, how much will a principal be willing or able to alter his or her administrative style, for what reasons and under what conditions? This is of pressing importance for future action and research on school improvement.

The most significant of the team's OD activities took place at the Crosby school. The organization development consultant did most of the advance planning with the principal, teachers and district superintendent. He helped them to establish their goals and priorities and to create structures that would provide for clear and efficient use of the team's resources. He was aided at critical times during this period by other team members (the school-community organizer and several teacher advisors). Following the initial planning period, the other team members established regular working relationships with the school. The organization development consultant continued to serve as an advisor to the principal and also took an active role in designing and carrying out periodic program evaluations with the staff.

The success of the project at Crosby strongly suggests the usefulness of a planning facilitator who will help the school plan its own development and provide continuity between the school and the team throughout the term of the team's engagement. The planning facilitator assists the school through its initial stages of self-examination and planning. He or she attempts to bring the services of various team members to bear in helping a school go through its initial problem-solving stages. As the developmental process in each school unfolds, the planning facilitator schedules the services of various team members, including his or her own services, according to the specific needs at any particular moment in time.

Our strong hunch is that such a planning facilitator is likely to constitute the most effective form of "organization development" intervention. Not only will organizational issues come to the fore in the process of reflection and planning, but the very processes needed for a school to reflect successfully, and then to develop and implement a plan are likely to require that the school improve its internal communication, coordination, and collaboration. The planning facilitator is also likely to be able to offer useful process consultation to principal, teachers, and community during the initial period and thereafter.

Three Other Key Issues

Three other important issues surfaced in the context of our work.

District Support

Active district support is essential to the long range success of a school development project. At Appleton the district superintendent acted as a gracious host to our team, but our contract with him did not include a formal commitment to our educational purposes. As a result, neither the principal nor the teachers felt a clear endorsement to our mission from the superintendent. At the second school, the district superintendent requested the services of the team, participated in planning and evaluation, contributed the services of district resource people, allocated necessary material resources, and provided released time for teachers. This very visible commitment, in our estimation, contributed greatly to the commitment of principal and teachers, and expressed the importance of the project as a whole.

We would recommend, in the light of this experience, that in establishing working relationships with a school, a team work together with the district superintendent and the school to firmly relate the school's developmental priorities to the priorities of the superintendent and to secure visible (material) signs of the superintendent's support. The securing of tangible district support may be a difficult task and may, as occurred in the Crosby case, require significant pressure from the community. We would maintain, however, that without district support which is based on district priorities, a school has relatively little chance of sustaining its long-range development goals (see also Berman & McLaughlin, 1975, 1977; Lieberman and Shiman, 1973).

Contract

The establishment of a clear, short-term, renegotiable contract can greatly facilitate the team's relationship with a school. At Appleton the relationship between the team and the school was based upon a vague and informal agreement. The team was to be there for three years to pursue generally the conditions of the grant with the school and the community. There were neither clear goals nor clear expectations shared by school and team. As a result, confusion often occurred regarding the team's role and frequently the services of the team were not efficiently used by teachers. At Crosby, on the other hand, the writing of a school development plan in the form of a contract between the school, the community, the district superintendent, and the facilitation team was found to be an effective way to avoid confusion over goals and expectations, and at the same time, to emphasize the ownership of the program at the local level. The contract was written for a 10-week period of engagement and was renewed after an evaluation by teachers, principal, superintendent, and the team.

We recommend that the facilitation team establish a contract with school, district, and community which would specify goals and objectives, identify resource needs, and clearly lay out the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. The contract should be short-term (6-20 weeks) with a clear provision for renegotiation at the end of the contract period (Cichon & Scheinfeld, 1978).

Gradualness

We have found at all levels of our work that a gradual approach to change is the most effective. For example, the most successful relationships between advisors and teachers gradually evolved from very simple, low threat, contacts over fragments of curriculum or physical space to increasingly comprehensive work. The simplicity and directness of the early stages was a crucial ingredient in developing trust between teacher and advisor.

Relationships between the teachers and the Parent Support Group at Appleton followed a similar pattern. Inputs to teachers were at first confined to simple clerical work. Later, as trust developed, the inputs became more rich and varied.

The gradual parallel strengthening of the Parent Support Group and the Teacher Planning Committee is a further example. Only when these groups had reached a high degree of development did collaboration between parents and teachers on school-wide projects begin.

In general, gradualness has proved to be a sine qua non of successful educational changes (Shiman & Lieberman, 1974; Smith & Keith, 1971; Miles and Wolf, 1978). Teachers, parents, and administrators not only need time to focus problems, needs, goals, and strategies, they also need time to experiment, take risks, make decisions, and used limited resources. Hence, in the initial stages of a school's self-reflection and planning, it cannot be expected that teachers, parents, and principal will formulate goals and plans that can stand as long-range projections for the school. It takes time for teachers and others to come to grips with what they really want and need. Teachers are better able to articulate their goals and needs having once actively entered into a process of developing and trying innovations based on some initial reflections. If the strategy for improvement is gradual it also is likely that more teachers will become voluntarily involved than in a program which pushes for the rapid establishment of new goals and high expectations. Teachers are likely to feel more accepted, less judged, and experience less risk in asking for help.

Summary and Conclusion

Through the material presented here, supplemented by occasional references to the literature, we have attempted to give substantial support to the argument that a three-faceted design for educational change, combining classroom advisory, school-community organizing, and organization development, is worthy of consideration as a significant strategy for school improvement. Whether or not this argument has an impact will in part depend upon the first-hand experience of the reader. If you are an OD person you may have found that a straight OD approach does not tend to result in the degree of classroom improvement or parental involvement that you would like to see take place. You may want to consider adding a teacher-advisory component to your consulting team and placing a greater emphasis on the development of community support. If you are a classroom consultant you may have discovered that progress in the classroom is often impeded or ultimately negated by a non-supportive staff, principal, or community, If so, you ma want to consider combining forces with an organization development specialist and a specialist in school-community relations. Alternatively, you might want to develop these additional skills yourself. If you are a parent organizer you may have found that parent involvement improves school-community relations or improves the morale of teachers or fosters slight boosts in children's achievement, but does not result in sufficient improvement of the child's classroom experience. If so, you may want to consider teaming with an organization development person and with teacher advisors.

Similarly, if you are a district administrator, you may have found that many or most of your attempts at bringing about school improvement fall far short of the goal or disappear entirely after an initial project period. You may have observed that these failures result from some combination of factors mentioned above such as lack of teacher ownership in the project, a non-supportive organizational climate within the school, lack of follow-through in the classroom by special advisory people, or parental opposition. If so, you may want to consider forming a three-faceted district team which will help local schools and their communities to plan and pursue programs of instructional improvement based upon their priorities and concerns.

Even after accepting the desirability of a three-faceted design for change, there will no doubt be many ways in which those ideas can be applied. In our own case, we have evolved what could be called the "Planning Facilitator Model." In this strategy an organization development person provides the pivotal role for a change-agent team which also involves teacher-advisors and a school-community organizer. The planning facilitator assists the school in a long-term process of self-reflection and self-development, much in the style of the renewal coordinator. He or she flexibly includes the school-community organizer to help bring the community as fully as possible into that process. The planning facilitator also provides sensitive matches between the classroom development goals of the school and the skills of the teacher-advisors. Together, this group of people constitutes a coordinated team that maintains a high level of internal communication.

The proposed model goes one important step further than the design we used at Crosby. In the Crosby plan, the team had specific classroom aims and chose to work with a school which shared those aims. This may still be a viable plan under some circumstances. However, in general we are now suggesting that there should be more flexibility on the part of a team, i.e., that the team make itself avaialbe to respond to a wide variety of classroom aims and styles which may emerge in the spectrum of schools it serves. This greater availability of the change team places more demands on the skill of team members than is the case in a team which espouses a specific philosophy of education. In a case where it is not possible to represent a sufficiently wide variety of classroom advisory skills on a team, it may be possible to constitute a tailored team for each school, drawing on a pool of potential consultants. These consultants may come from the ranks of district resource personnel or from outside research people. The team may also consist largely of teachers, counselors, and administrators who are released on a part-time basis to be teacher-advisors, OD consultants, or school-community organizers. This has been successfully done in OD consultation through a district cadre approach (Schmuck et.al, 1977), and also in relation to the classroom advisory (Seckinger, 1977). Many different permutations are possible using varying combinations of full-time and part-time people, insiders and outsiders. The person who most needs to be in a full-time position is the planning facilitator; he or she is the major coordinating figure in this model.

Whatever approach is taken, however, whether it be some form of the Planning Facilitator model or some other, it is essential that full support exist at the district level. This is most readily achieved in a highly enlightened district where the district administrator values grass roots self-renewal and is willing to provide resources to assist schools in the time-consuming process of change. Whatever may be the case, it is likely to be important that a team forge a strong alliance with the district administrator without being extensions of his or her authority. The inclusion of a school-community development aspect in the design is of course double-edged. At first it may be resisted by a district administrator. But in the long run, parental involvement and support for schools' self-renewal activities provide the district administrator and the board with legitimacy for allowing the school to take risks.

Educators and change agents are becoming increasingly aware of the multiplicity of interdependent factors which simultaneously determine the nature of what goes on in public school classrooms. We have tried to articulate some of that complexity and to suggest a design for improvement which takes into account a wider section of the realities than is normally covered in any one approach. We are suggesting, in effect, that the three separately developed disciplines of the classroom advisory, school-community organization, and organization development now be combined into a more comprehensive design which will have a greater chance of succeeding; this design relates to a very significant array of the factors involved in making or breaking school change efforts. It may not be easy to do; administrative and budgetary considerations make this difficult. However, in realizing the three-faceted design we are likely to be more successful and to stretch our consciousness to new levels of understanding.

References

Berman, Paul, & McLaughlin, Milbrey Wallin. Federal programs supporting educational change, Vol. IV: The findings in review: Santa Monica: Rand, 1975.

Berman, Paul, McLaughlin, Milbrey Wallin with assistance of Bass, Gail, Paulty, Edward and Zellman, Gail. Federal programs supporting educational change, Vol. VII: Factors affecting implementation and continuation. Santa Monica: Rand, 1977.

Bigelow, Ronald C. Changing classroom interaction through organization development. In Richard A. Schmuck & Matthew B. Miles (Eds.), Organization development in schools. La Jolla: University Associates, 1971.

Bridge, Gary R. Parent participation in school innovations. Teachers college record, 77 (3), February 1976.

Bussis, Anne M., & Chittenden, Edward A. Analysis of an approach to open education. Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1970.

Cichon, Ronald E., & Scheinfeld, Daniel R. A process of change in chicago elementary schools. (Report to the Chicago Board of Education) Institute for Juvenile Research, May, 1978.

Devaney, Kathleen. *Developing open education in america: A review of theory and practice in the public schools*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1974.

Fullan, Michael, & Pomfret, Alan. Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. *Review of educational research*, 47 (1), Winter 1977.

Keys, Christopher B., & Kreisman, Rhoda L. Organization development, classroom climate, and grade level. *Group and organizational studies*, 3 (2), June, 1978.

Lieberman, Ann. The power of the principal: Research findings. In Carmen M. Culver & Gary J. Hoban (Eds.), *The power to change*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1973.

Mai, Robert P. Inservice in the classroom: The advisory approach. In Kathleen Devaney (Ed.), *Essays on teachers' centers*. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1977.

Manolakes, Theodore. The advisory system and supervision. In Kathleen Devaney (Ed.), *Essays on teachers' centers*. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1977. Reprinted as a shortened version with changes: Sergiovanni, Thomas J. *Professional supervision for professional teachers*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1975.

Miller, Lynne and Wolf, Thomas. Staff development for school change. *Teachers College Record*, 80 (1), September, 1978.

Nicholas, June, & Palma, Adora with Cichon, Ronald, Hazell, Clive, Mohrman, Mary Beth, and Scheinfeld, Daniel R. Opening up: The personal accounts of two teachers. Unpublished manuscript, Institute for Juvenile Research, Chicago, 1977.

Smith, Louis, & Keith, Pat. Anatomy of an educational innovation. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971.

Schmuck, Richard A., & Runkel, Philip J., Arends, Jane H., and Arends, Richard I. The second handbook of organization development in schools. Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1977.

Seckinger, Barbara. A look at the first year: Experienced teachers as advisors to their colleagues. Unpublished paper, Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, 1977.

Shiman, David A., & Lieberman, Ann. A non-model for school change. The Educational Forum, May 1974, pp. 441-445.

Spodek, Bernard, & Manolakes, Theodore. In-class teacher training for open education. Paper presented at AERA Conference, Chicago, April 1972.

Williams, Richard C., Wall, Charles C., Martin, W. Michael, & Berchin, Arthur. Effecting organizational renewal in schools. New York: McGraw Hill, 1974.

Wood, Carolyn. The roles, strategies, and problems of the advisor in public schools. Proceedings of the Midwest Advisory Conference of the Educational Confederation, St. Louis, April 1974.

Zaltman, Gerald, Florio, David, and Sikorski, Linda. Dynamic educational change. New York: Free Press, 1977.

Meeting the Challenges of Renewing Urban Schools:
A Summary of Recommendations

by

Richard Schmuck, Richard Francisco, and Warren Bell
Center for Educational Policy and Management

and

Tom Gross and Marc Bassin
High School Renewal Program

The foregoing articles add up to much more than the sum of their separate contributions. While each article makes a contribution in its own right to meeting some of the challenges of renewing urban schools, the gestalt constituted by all of the articles offers a message of optimism for the advocates of change in urban schools uncommon in the research literature of the past generation. Perhaps the applied behavioral sciences have begun to turn the corner in their capability for making a contribution to constructive renewal in urban schools!

To summarize the collection of articles briefly: The initial article by Richard Schmuck defined the domain and the content of this issue, that of self renewal for urban schools through the various applications of process consultation. Process consultation was defined as focusing primarily on the how of interpersonal and group interactions rather than on the what of their content. Thus process facilitation aims to help urban educators with methods of communication, goal setting and problem solving and with procedures for planning, decision making, and implementing change.

The next article by Warren Bell presented a detailed description of some of the debilitating social-psychological features of urban schools. In particular, the psychodynamics of helplessness, powerlessness, and depersonalization act as severe hindrances to renewal. But as the subsequent articles revealed, these hindrances need not block all efforts at self-renewal in urban schools. The case studies offered by Gross, Bassin, and Jordan, by Porterfield and Porterfield, by Francisco, Keys, Milstein, and Scheinfeld each--at least in a partial way--demonstrated that despite the array of restraining forces present in a majority of our urban schools, there are some promising methods for facilitating their renewal. Indeed, the six cases--drawn from some of the largest urban environments in the United States--showed that not every urban school is beyond hope; that not every urban staff is unwilling to try out new procedures for working together; and that not every urban school is a nightmarish situation for process consultation. And the more we learn about what other process-oriented change agents are doing in other urban school districts right now, the more we gain optimism about the potential for the renewal of our toughest schools.

Nevertheless, we are not naive optimists. Obviously, the task of renewing urban schools has a long, long way to go. And it seems clear that process strategies alone are only a partial antidote. The challenge of creating supportive, stimulating, and collaborative school climates for urban students in being tackled at a snail's pace and is many leagues from being realized. In this concluding article we present a few recommendations that grow out of the respective experiences and insights of the authors of this issue. The recommendations are aimed at assisting those change-oriented educators and consultants who wish to put the theories of school renewal into practice in the urban scene. We believe that our recommendations offer at least a starting point today for making headway on the challenge of renewing urban schools. These recommendations are not final; they are tentative. Moreover, they are not panaceas or cure-alls for the myriad ills that plague our schools. But they are grounded in experience and they are "hard-nosed" in that if they are ignored we believe that process interventions will have little impact on renewal.

Before presenting the recommendations, we summarize our views of the social-psychological states of the primary actors within urban schools, the educators, to show some of the reasons for making the recommendations that we do. We go on to summarize the articles submitted by the contributors to this issue and we summarize the challenges still faced by process consultation.

The Alienation of Urban Educators

Robert Heinlein in the science fiction novel, Stranger in a Strange Land, writes of the psychological problems in social adjustment faced by a Mars-bred earthlingupon his return to earth. It is curious to us that Heinlein could very well have been writing an allegory about the plight of urban teachers and administrators. We have observed in urban schools a significant number of "strangers in a strange land." For the most part the staff members of the minority culture of the students, and those few who are members of the particular culture are socially and economically strangers to the urban poor. Many do not reside in the neighborhoods in which they teach, nor do their own children attend the schools in which they teach. They typically do not share the values, aspirations, or needs of the students' parents. And in contrast to adjusting to the culture of this strange land, for the most part urban staff members have unwittingly, but systematically, set up barriers between themselves and the urban community. Perhaps these barriers can be best understood as being protective and defensive. White educators, particularly those with years of tenure, feel they cannot (or in some cases choose not to) understand and empathize with the concerns of the urban poor. Their sense seems to be that the urban problems are not their problems. Attitudes like these have, of course, led to increasing the social distance between the school and the minority community. And for their part, many minority community members are afraid to enter the hostile, unfriendly environment of the strange land inhabited by educators. The two sides are apart and alienated.

But alienation for urban educators is even more complex. Alienation arises from some educators who valiantly make efforts to break out of the traditional norms and structures of the urban school. It occurs particularly for those innovative educators--whether they be white or black--who try to understand, adjust, and cope with the strange land. For example, their efforts may include setting up special tutorials for students, spending extra time on after-school problem-solving teams, visiting homes and establishments in the neighborhood to enlist volunteer help and school support, inviting parents to present special class or school-wide presentations and the like. The list could go on for there are, in virtually every urban school we have visited, a handful of innovative teachers or administrators with positive aspirations for what the urban school could be. But most of those soon become alienated as well. The alienation also arises because of pressure from other staff members who discourage their colleagues from working above and beyond the call of duty. Those teachers who seek to bring improvements into the urban school often discover that they are viewed in a bad light by the majority of colleagues who do not share the former's missionary zeal. Other times, the pressure toward alienation comes from external sources, such as the leadership of a teacher's union who strive to get all teachers to abide by uniform standards. All of these pressures provide ample reason for the teachers who are dedicated to change to choose retreat into the security of their classrooms and to attempt innovations only there.

Process Improvements Can Make A Difference

As we have noted, pressures toward alienation come from a variety of sources and most of the urban educators with whom we have consulted experience both the social pressures and the feeling of alienation. Some house feelings of being helpless and powerless within themselves. Others feel out of place, dissatisfied or disappointed with the staff, the administration, and the district office. Alienation from the purposes of education causes both the teachers and the administrators to give up their commitment to the school's program and to lose touch with the mission of the school. Figuratively, as alienation takes a hold, urban educators wander about aimlessly like strangers in a strange land, feeling little energy or motivation to make the school a more productive place. They view working in the school as just an eight-to-five job, ritualistically punching the clock and putting in their time.

Process consultation aims to reduce the alienation of educators through reintroducing them to the benefits and excitement of collaborative problem solving. Through a focus on the procedures of staff communication, goal setting, supportive work relationships, and participative methods of problem solving, the process consultant seeks to establish optimism among staff members that openness, cooperation, and rational deliberation can reduce alienation and lead to satisfying improvements in the school. High involvement in the procedures of collaborative problem solving can teach educators that it is possible for them to feel more comfortable and satisfied with one another, with students, with parents and with interested outsiders. That metamorphosis can lead to other changes in the urban school organization and can help to bring the alienated and isolated staff members back into the heart of the school's operation. The staff then becomes an environment in which educators receive encouragement from one another for participation in special school-wide projects that may benefit the total school. It becomes an organization in which all members of the school community, teachers, students, administrators, and parents share the ideal of being co-participants in a complex but manageable association.

The strategy of process consultation is fundamentally humanistic. The bringing of people together in the school into collaborative problem solving about their own daily lives is antithetical to alienation. Collaborative problem solving helps the participants to become "members of a familiar country" rather than "strangers in a strange land." The creation of the "new country" and the ideals of ownership and commitment, however, can not be developed over night. It is an effort that takes months, sometimes years of time, energy, and skill. The six cases described in this issue offer tips for getting the effort started. In particular, they present information about strategies that evolved over time, about the skills and techniques needed to reduce alienation among staff, students, and community, and about processes that enhanced collaborative problem solving in urban schools. A brief review of each contribution brings out those common salient features.

The High School Renewal Program in New York City offers an excellent example of how collaborative problem solving can both reduce alienation and increase the possibilities of school improvement. The heart of the effort is the renewal committee, a representative body serving as a microcosm of the entire staff. It is here that alienation is first reduced as colleagues and members of different departments begin to share ideas and goals and communicate their concerns to one another. Students are also offered a voice in the planning process, and gradually, special task forces comprised of teachers and students are formed to work on special problems. The renewal coordinator maintains communicative links across all of the efforts. Staff members come alive with interest and involvement as they see discussions and plans coming to fruition. New learning settings are created, curricula are revised, special classes are formed, and the like. The school is no longer a strange, unfriendly or lonely place, at least for many of the participants who become directly involved in the renewal process.

The West Coast DTA project, described by Richard Francisco, focused its attention on trying to help urban educators develop new information and skills in relation to collaborative problem solving. This was carried out in relation to individual professionals, such as the new assistant principals, in relation to intact school teams, such as the counseling staff of a high school, and in relation to schools, such as the entire staff of an elementary school. Efforts were aimed at helping the participants to gain a greater sense of control over their own destinies and at helping them to help themselves, particularly through collaborative problem solving. Data feedback methods were used to help individuals, teams, and staff to share vital concerns. Problem solving procedures were taught to participants so that they would be capable of solving their own problems. Many participants did become more proactive, more diagnostic, and more collaborative in that project. However, after two years, only the seeds were planted and much nurturance and care are now needed to foster the growth of a fully blooming renewal effort. It has a long way to go, but can be successful.

In Keys' descriptions of process consultation in urban parochial schools, facilitators from the district staff and an urban college of education teamed up to train temporary teams of the principal and teacher in group problem solving skills. Later, as part of a followup macrodesign, additional staff members were brought into the training and the temporary teams were dissolved as problem solving and renewal became operational in the schools. Important assests of these interventions were the high readiness for process improvement on the part of participating staff members, and the subsequent networking that occurred across trained staffs. Perhaps, as Keys points out, parochial urban schools have a greater readiness to profit from renewal than do the beleaguered staffs of our urban public schools.

The initial work of the SIRT team in Buffalo, a cadre of process consultants, included numerous training sessions focused on expressing concerns, communicating skillfully, setting goals, and solving problems. With these new skills of process facilitation, SIRT members have helped school staffs deal with the social-psychological problems of desegregation. The SIRT has become involved in renewal through peer consultation. Like the renewal coordinators in New York, SIRT members deliver process help to their colleagues. They facilitate problem solving in relation to issues of desegregation at the school site. In this way, process facilitation can more easily be institutionalized than the sort of process consultation described by Francisco. But the SIRT must be concerned about collaborative problem solving and renewal at two levels: within the schools to which it brings help and within itself. Considerable power can be wielded by a facilitative cadre of this sort, particularly if it models in its own internal dynamics the sorts of collaborative problem solving that its members aim to bring to the desegregating schools.

Perhaps the most impactful design for urban school renewal--at least in terms of instructional improvement in the local school--is the three-faceted design carried out by Daniel Scheinfeld. In his intervention, a planning facilitator helped to bring together staff members to specify school-wide concerns and to carry out school-wide problem-solving. A community organizer bridged the social distance between the staff and the community, making collaborative problem solving feasible at that interface. And a classroom advisor provided assistance to classroom teachers about their instructional goals, procedures, and impact. All three roles share the common denominators of reducing alienation and establishing collaborative problem solving. The three are separate roles. Can the three roles and the separate levels of collaborative problem solving be brought together and integrated? If so, Scheinfeld has commenced the development of a potentially very powerful strategy for urban school renewal.

In short, the strategies, techniques, and skills described in the six cases present a composit from which several useful tips or recommendations can be drawn. And the recommendations combine to provide a framework for undertaking renewal efforts in urban schools--efforts which rely largely on process consultation.

Challenges Faced by Process Consultation

While the assortment of consultative methods for making process improvements in school renewal has been increasing in numbers and sophistication, their impact on improving student achievement as well as the organizational climates of urban schools is still limited. Why is this so? What are the most salient challenges we face?

Challenge 1: The Apparently Intractable Urban School and its Community.

The socio-economic, organizational and educational problems endemic to urban schools are complex and resistant to solutions. Raising attendance ten percentage points, reducing absenteeism by twenty-five percent, improving reading levels, while often needed, are not readily accomplished either with or without process improvement in the school. In urban schools, many of the complex factors that may affect these deficiencies such as control of staffing and reduced budgets are often impervious to the strategy of process interventions and renewal efforts. Expectations about what process consultation can and cannot accomplish have not been explicit and realistic enough for planned renewal efforts to survive in the urban school context.

Challenge 2: Getting Urban-School Department Heads, Principals, and District Administrators to Manage More Effectively.

Due in part to their origins in private business, process consultation strategies implicity assume that managers typically manage well. In schools, as well as in the business world, this assumption is of course often misleading or incorrect. The techniques of goal-setting and problem solving by themselves are inadequate to help managers upgrade their skills. In the private sector, with stringent accountability systems and explicit assessment of the "bottom line" of profit, process techniques have been useful for skilled managers. In the public sector administrators often need both the tools of organization development (e.g., data feedback and participative decision making) and the process knowledge and skills associated with managerial effectiveness (e.g., accountability, planning, and organizing). This challenge is particularly acute in relation to department heads and principals who receive very little management training either in their formal schooling or through professional development.

Challenge 3: The Scattered and Non-Cumulative Application of Process Consultation in Urban Schools.

The procedures for renewal offered by process consultation have often been too piecemeal and intuitive to be effective in solving the complex problems of urban schools. Instead of comprehensive applications of process strategies, school-based process facilitators have often employed too limited designs such as team building for one administrative team or systematic planning with one teacher group. While these focused applications may have been helpful to the participants, they have been insufficient in themselves to affect significantly the wide scope of school problems.

Challenge 4: The Lack of Energy and Time for Renewal of Urban Schools.

The task of applying process strategies to schools effectively requires significant energy and time commitments by most of the key actors in the school, particularly administrators and head teachers. To institutionalize a renewal process in a complex urban school, at least two to three years of sustained process facilitation will be needed. During this period the process facilitators must learn about the school's group structures and processes, accomplish significantresults, establish credibility with the staff and become a catalyst for the development of problem solving teams and changes in the management of the school. As the internal leadership for the renewal effort develops, the process consultants who are external to the school can gradually withdraw support to an occasional, "on-call" or maintenance relationship. Such a design takes time, however, and consequently can frustrate impatient and overworked school people who have little extra energy. The number of after-school hours required for renewal along the way also tries the patience of many school people who already feel overworked. Especially during times of urban budget cuts and overall demoralization of staffs, it is difficult to get more than a handful of school people to volunteer their time for the renewal effort. And, in severely demoralized schools people who volunteer significant amounts of time unfortunately are often regarded by their peers as either foolish or persuing personal agendas.

Consultants external to the staff also have time limitations but still their presence is essential, particularly during the formative stages of a renewal effort. We believe there to be a correlation between the time the consultant spends with staff members and the effectiveness and speed of development of the renewal effort. Nonetheless, a process consultant usually cannot be supported financially to spend more than one half day per week in a school. And this is often an inadequate amount of time to make the renewal effort viable.

Recommendations for Renewing Schools

These challenges are significant and formidable. The difficulties of the urban context, the absence of managerial effectiveness, the piecemeal efforts at renewal, and the low level of energy and time available for renewal all conspire to limit the potential contributions of process consultation for urban school renewal. While it is true that the results of the six cases described above are promising, the cases also reveal how very difficult and challenging it is to implement renewal in urban schools.

The complexitites of a poor community, the sheer size of the school, and the traditional instructional methods of lecture and drill also combine to make efforts at constructive planned change formidable. Nevertheless, as we have indicated, the results of the efforts described above do offer a ray of hope that constructive renewal is possible. We believe moreover that process consultation for renewal continues to offer some powerful designs and techniques for facilitating urban school change. At the same time, our experiences have shown that unless the following recommendations are heeded process improvement strategies will go the way of other ineffective technical assistance efforts in the urban schools.

Recommendation 1: Don't Beat Around the Bush with Urban Educators! Present a Readily Understood Design for School Renewal.

Renewal efforts will be most successful when they are guided by an easily understood design for collaborative problem solving. Not only will such a design serve as a guide for the consultant who is trying to facilitate renewal but also for staff members who are attempting to understand the nature of the change effort. With clearly delineated steps in a renewal design the client can become a collaborator with the consultant [illegible] each step is approached. Clear designs also provide a framework for [illegible]ing the effectiveness of the renewal effort, offering milestones and checkpoints for progress. Most important, clearly understood designs for collaborative problem solving can eventually be used by the staff members themselves without the continuous assistance of an outside process facilitator.

Too often the roots of failure in relation of our renewal efforts in urban schools have been related to what we said or did not say at start-up. It is during start-up that the foundation of the design for renewal is laid. A number of key questions must be answered: Which people in the school are going to comprise an ongoing renewal group, and how is the coordinator of such a group to be determined? What time arrangements will be made for this group to meet? What resources will be available to the group? What is the explicit decision making relationship between this group, the principal and other units in the school such as the union? And what sequence of steps will comprise the future process? But perhaps the most crucial question to raise is how much active involvement and support the principal is willing to give to the renewal effort. Renewal requires the strong interest, involvement, and support of the principal.

Recommendation 2: Don't Underplay the Expertise of the External Consultants at the Start of Renewal! Use Process Consultants who Come from Agencies with High Credibility.

In general, people with legal problems see lawyers and people with medical problem see doctors. However, school people with organizational problems do not readily see organizational consultants because the field of process facilitation and organization development does not have the credibility of law or medicine. For this reason, the organizational consultant's credibility as a professional can be enhanced at start-up not because of the consultant's professional designation but rather through his or her organizational affiliation. In New York City, for example, the Economic Development Council's credibility with the school district greatly facilitated entry of the process consultants at every stage of development of the Renewal Program. It is helpful for effective entry into a school system for the consultants to have the backing of a credible external organization such as EDC, CEPM, a university, or a foundation.

In addition, it is essential that the consultants are indeed experts and that they act as experts. This is particularly important during start-up. Consultants must be directive about the processes used and the strategies followed. If participants believe they can solve problems collaboratively but actually don't have the skills and methods needed, the consultant would be wise to insist that they wait and only attempt problem solving after the necessary skills are in place.

Recommendation 3: Don't Rely Primarily on Consultants Who Are External to the District! Right from the Start of the Comprehensive Design, Designate Staff Members to Facilitate Renewal.

Too many renewal efforts have bitten the dust and too many innovations have not been sustained in urban schools because of low ownership or commitment on the part of staff members, particularly, the principal, department heads, influential teachers and the like. While external consultants can certainly be useful in getting renewal started or in giving a special push to it once it is going, insiders must be integrally involved from the outset both in receiving process assistance and in giving it.

To implement a comprehensive design for renewal, the most likely and feasible process facilitators would be: (a) Counselors and Instructional Assistant Principals acting in the role of teacher consultant for collaborative problem solving in relation to instructional improvement; (b) Teachers acting in the role of renewal coordinator for problem solving on the faculty; and (c) Teachers, counselors, and administrators acting in the role of cadre members for process facilitation in relation to renewal at the organizational interface between staff and parents and between staff and the district office.

The teacher-consultants could interact with classroom teachers in the style of clinical supervision, helping teachers to be clear about their instructional goals and responsibilities, to diagnose student capabilities and resources, to test out innovative instructional practices, and to offer constructive feedback about the impact of those practices on the students. The renewal coordinator could help representative renewal committees and newly emerging task forces to move through problem solving cycles in relation to the curriculum and related instructional issues. Cadre members could use the strategies of training, data feedback, confrontation, and process observation and feedback to increase collaborative problem solving at the organizational interfaces.

Recommendation 4: Don't Rely on a Few Methods for Facilitating Process Improvement! Encourage an Eclectic Orientation to Process Consultation, Tailoring Each Intervention for the Particular Educators who are Involved.

The experiences of the authors of the above articles, along with some research on federal programs by the Rand Corporation, have demonstrated that rigid and packaged designs are not as effective in dynamic urban schools as are designs that lend themselves to evolution through "mutual adaptation" between consultants and clients. Mutual adaptation permits more appropriate fit between a design and the client system, particularly when a design with alternative choices is presented to the client as a starting point.

Francisco's article described four different strategies that we think are worth noting again. Implementing training, the consultant teaches participants to make use of particular group processes, such as communication skills, goal setting procedures, problem solving steps, and decision making strategies. Training is particularly useful for developing teams, committees, and task forces, or in helping an entire staff to become engaged in collaborative problem solving. Another strategy, that of data feedback, is implemented when the consultant collects data from students, teachers, parents, and the like and offers analyses of the data to educators for problem solving. Through data feedback, the educators receive a valid description of how some critical others perceive or feel about a particular domain, such as the curriculum. In confrontation, a third strategy, the consultant acts as a third party to bring two parties in conflict closer together for problem solving. It may be used, for example, in helping teachers and parents to air differences and to find superordinate goals to bring them together. Finally, process observation and feedback occurs when the consultant helps the teacher in the classroom, or the renewal committee in action, to take a second look at the processes that have been going on and to carry out problem solving for improvements in the future.

This repertoire of process methods can be combined in unique ways for each client group within the comprehensive design. It is better to design flexibly than to have the same package ready for every process consultation.

Recommendation 5: Don't Assume that the School People Who Hold Formal Leadership Are Effective Managers! Design Opportunities to Train and Coach Team Leaders, Department Heads, and Principals.

As we have already indicated, renewal efforts in urban schools, should not assume that the team leaders, department heads and principals are effective managers. Poor management by principals, in particular in the areas of implementation and accountability, often proves to be a major stumbling block for a renewal project. For this reason, comprehensive training and consultation with principals on basic management skills must be integrated into the process consultation. Often special efforts and different strategies must be used with principals to (1) enable a renewal effort to move forward and (2) ensure its eventual implementation and success.

Recommendation 6: Don't Focus Change Efforts Narrowly! Design Renewal to Take Place Simultaneously at Several System Levels of the Urban School.

Our experiences have indicated time and again that piecemeal efforts at process improvement--those that focus on staff relationships alone or instructional improvement alone--are too weak to have sustained impact. As some sociologists have recently argued, the structure of the school organization is loosely coupled. Consequently deliberate planning must go into making the process intervention comprehensive, such that several key subsystems of the urban school are engaged in collaborative problem solving at the same time. We should not assume, for example, that working with a renewal committee will necessarily influence classroom processes, nor should we assume that instructional interventions will serve to raise collaborative problem solving between staff and parents.

Renewal efforts of the future should be at least as comprehensive as the three-faceted design of Scheinfeld. Consultations and training sessions should be implemented simultaneously in classrooms, with departments, with total staff, with administrators, with salient groups outside the school. In relation to the last, process interventions should be designed to enhance collaborative problem solving between the staff and parents as well as between staff and key officials in the district office. While we understand that such comprehensive designing may seem awesome and formidable, we also believe just as strongly that comprehensive designing for process improvement is the best way to go.

Moreover, too often what is experienced and learned by participants in an off-site training session does not transfer to the back-home situation. Research has shown that the normative system created in an off-site environment is substantially different from the home organization and the gap is difficult if not impossible to breach. To overcome this dilemma training must be seen as principally happening on site in the context of real work rather than through a series of off site simultations. With this perspective, off site training can be designed to specifically meet the needs which arise as the project proceeds; hence the learnings can be more readily transferred back home. This was the method described by Porterfield and Porterfield in the training of the school renewal coordinator.

Recommendation 7: Don't Give Up on the Renewal Process Too Soon! Keep a Long-Term Perspective of Two to Three Years in Mind. Then Assume that After that Renewal Requires Continued Attention.

The sorts of myriad changes required for renewal are fundamental and very complex. Think of them for the moment! Teachers taking responsibility for student learning. Teachers testing out different classroom procedures. Teachers and administrators planning, problem solving, and implementing new actions together. Staff members and parents collaborating in relation to instruction. The list can get much longer. A shorthand way of talking about the changes is to say that the school's norms, structures, and procedures must be fashioned so that continuous, collaborative, and proactive problem solving is possible. This will take time.

It will also take money. Not massive amounts but enough to allow for release time for planning and problem solving. The New York program asked each school for sufficient money to release a teacher for twenty percent of a position to enable them to coordinate the renewal effort.

Recommendation 8: Don't Keep Renewal Facilitators and School Staffs that Are Involved in Renewal Isolated From One Another! Set Up Networks of Facilitators and Schools for the Sharing of Strategies and Results and for Affective Support.

We have just begun to recognize the importance of supportive networking. It is important for those who are attempting process improvements in urban schools to band together, both for the exchange of information and for social-emotional support. This year the editors of this issue are sponsoring one meeting in New York and another in Eugene, Oregon to nurture those networks and to take stock of what needs to be done next.

We need more trained renewal facilitators and process consultants. Training grounds are available. The university, traditionally has been the primary source of training, but as increasing numbers of schools become involved the schools themselves become a primary source since those involved in these processes in the schools are in an ideal position to be trained as external consultants.

Most importantly, more comparative research on comprehensive strategies for renewal of schools is needed. As the effectiveness of process consultation in schools is documented and developed its credibility